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14. ABSTRACT This thesis seeks to answer the research question: What strategic policy assessments should be made by intelligence prior to committing U.S. military forces to war? Supporting details are culled from military and political writers addressing strategic policy issues and distilled into the following framework: problem identification, interests analysis, objective and end state assessment, internal strategic appraisal, comparative national power assessment, strategy development, and the identification and closure of gaps between strategy and the means to execute that strategy. These seven basic considerations form the general outline for assessing the efficacy of committing U.S. forces to war.					
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ABSTRACT

TITLE OF THESIS: Strategic Intelligence Considerations When Preparing for War

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This thesis seeks to answer the research question: What strategic policy assessments should be made by intelligence prior to committing U.S. military forces to war? This research question was derived from the observations by Dr. Henry Kissinger that Secretary of Defense McNamara's Defense Department lacked an analytical framework for assessing the dynamics of the Vietnam war. The supporting hypothesis is that the strategic policy lessons learned from Vietnam, when combined with the teaching of Clausewitz, provide a framework for identifying key strategic intelligence considerations when preparing for war.

To substantiate that hypothesis four questions are addressed. What teachings from Clausewitz provide the basis for strategic intelligence? What are the American strategic policy lessons learned in Vietnam? How do the teachings of Clausewitz and the lessons learned combine into a framework for strategic policy intelligence? What sequence of assessments and considerations best facilitates strategic policy and strategy planning?

The methodology provides a strategic overview of the American experience in Vietnam, identifies the American strategic lessons learned, extracts from Clausewitz a

methodology for policy intelligence, integrates the lessons learned from Vietnam into Clausewitz's methodology, and proposes an analytical framework for providing strategic policy intelligence. Supporting details are culled from military and political writers addressing strategic policy issues and distilled into the following framework: problem identification, interests analysis, objective and end state assessment, internal strategic appraisal, comparative national power assessment, strategy development, and the identification and closure of gaps between strategy and the means to execute that strategy.

These seven basic considerations form the general outline for assessing the efficacy of committing U.S. forces to war.

**STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE CONSIDERATIONS
WHEN PREPARING FOR WAR**

by

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Unclassified thesis submitted to the Faculty
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The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and
do not reflect the official policy or position of the
Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

DEDICATION

To the Vietnam Veteran who loved his country more than it loved him.

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. OVERVIEW.....	1
Scope, 1	
Justification, 2	
Research Question, 2	
Hypothesis, 3	
Methodology, 3	
Definitions, 4	
Importance to the Intelligence Community, 9	
Implications for U.S. National Security, 9	
Sequence of Coverage, 10	
2. SETTING THE STAGE: VIETNAM AND CLAUSEWITZ	12
America Stumbles, 12	
The Vietnam Experience, 13	
The Intelligence Aspects of Clausewitz, 18	
Policy Intelligence Implications of Clausewitz, 25	
3. A CLAUSEWITIZIAN FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC POLICY INTELLIGENCE.....	28
Problem Identification, 28	
Interests Analysis, 33	
Objective and End State Identification, 37	
Strategic Appraisal, 47	
National Power Assessment, 53	
Strategy Development, 82	
Identification and Elimination of Gaps, 92	
4. A PROPOSED STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK	97
Overview, 97	
Problem Identification Considerations, 98	
Interests Analysis Considerations, 98	
Objective and End State Identification Considerations, 99	
Strategic Appraisal Considerations, 102	
National Power Assessment Considerations, 103	
Strategy Development Considerations, 105	

Identification and Elimination of Gaps Considerations, 107

5. CONCLUSIONS108

Hypothesis Review and Key Findings, 109

Recommendations, 113

Final Thoughts, 114

Appendixes

A. Summary of American Strategic Policy Lessons Learned.....115

B. Military Capabilities Analysis: Jordan, Taylor and Korb Model.....121

Bibliography.....123

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW

McNamara's Defense Department and Bundy's White House staff were gluttons for analysis. Both men were of extraordinary intelligence. What they lacked was criteria to assess a challenge so at variance with the American experience and American Ideology.

Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*

SCOPE

This thesis is a horizontal analysis of the strategic considerations for committing United States military forces to war. Intelligence professionals supporting policy are confronted with a unique, three dimensional analytical problem: the calculus of interaction among crisis life cycles (time); strategic, operational, and tactical planning considerations; and the selection of the proper combination and timing of the diplomatic, economic, and military levers of power. Below the strategic level, the multi-variate permutations become exceedingly difficult to assess and at the tactical level, become unmanageably dense for a thesis. However, at the strategic level, the issues are fewer, more basic, and more suitable for limited academic review.

JUSTIFICATION

Inept policy kills. And flawed intelligence support to policy is a betrayal of the soldier's trust. In both instances the mistakes killing our soldiers are errors made by the Statesman and General while pursuing political agendas. Good faith or not, these errors suggest the need for an enhanced role for Intelligence to reduce uncertainty and, where possible, provide clarification. In the United States, elections change executive leadership with sufficient frequency that long-term, broad-based competencies in crisis management never adequately develop and each new crisis is a learning exercise with the soldier shouldering the consequences. The Statesman does not always ask the right pre-deployment questions, and he is not always being provided either the questions or the framework for understanding the answers. The elusiveness of such a framework hobbles policy.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What strategic policy assessments should be made by intelligence analysts prior to committing U.S. military forces to war?

HYPOTHESIS

The strategic policy lessons learned from Vietnam, when combined with the teaching of Carl von Clausewitz, provide a framework for strategic policy intelligence that will reduce the gaps between wartime policy and strategy.

1. What teachings from Clausewitz provide the basis for strategic intelligence?
2. What are the American strategic policy lessons learned in Vietnam?
3. How do the teachings of Clausewitz and lessons learned from Vietnam combine into a framework for strategic policy intelligence?
4. What sequence of assessments and considerations best facilitates strategic policy and strategy planning?

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this thesis is to provide a strategic overview of the American experience in Vietnam, identify the strategic lessons learned, extract from Clausewitz a methodology for policy intelligence, integrate the lessons learned from Vietnam into Clausewitz's methodology, and propose an analytical framework for providing strategic policy intelligence.

To do this, I will review Clausewitz for the express purpose of bringing forth a rarely recognized and seldom appreciated insight he possessed concerning strategic policy intelligence. Then, I will summarize strategic considerations characterizing the American

military participation in Vietnam and list the strategic policy lessons learned as identified by Secretaries of Defense Robert S. McNamara and Clark Clifford, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, and President Richard M. Nixon. Next, I will integrate the observations of Clausewitz and the lessons learned from McNamara, Clifford, Kissinger and Nixon constructing a broad analytical framework for strategic policy intelligence. Supporting details will be culled from military and political writers addressing strategic policy issues. Finally, I will distill these considerations into a desk side reference for the intelligence analyst assessing the efficacy of deploying U.S. military forces to war.

DEFINITIONS

The following terms and concepts are an essential part of this thesis's framework and merit clarification.

Centers of Gravity - Those characteristics, capabilities, or localities from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or the will to fight.¹

Culture - The aggregate of learned, socially transmitted behavior patterns characteristic of a society. The culture of a social group is developed and maintained through formal and

¹Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: GPO, 10 June 1998), under "Centers of Gravity." Cited hereafter as JCS, Joint Pub 1-02.

informal learning, language, knowledge, folkways, beliefs, customs, traditions, institutions - in sum, totality of social experience.²

Culture, Political - The aggregate of learned, socially transmitted behavior patterns characterizing government and politics within a society. Political culture frequently connotes the psychological dimension of political behavior - beliefs, feelings, and evaluative orientations. A political culture is the product of historical experiences of the whole society as well as the personal experiences that contribute to the socialization of each individual. Within a national political culture one may distinguish between elite and mass subcultures, reflecting differences in the orientations of the political decision makers from those of the less active citizenry. The mass culture may in turn consist of numerous subcultures, based on class, ethnic, regional or other differences.³

Deterrence - The prevention from action by fear of the consequences. Deterrence is a state of mind brought about by a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction.⁴

End State - What the National Command Authorities want the situation to be when operations conclude - both military operations, as well as those where the military is in support of other instruments of national power.⁵

²Jack C. Plano, Robert E. Riggs, and Helenan S. Robin, *The Dictionary of Political Analysis* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1982), 34.

³Plano, 100.

⁴JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, under "deterrence."

⁵JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, under "end state."

Exit Strategy - The planned transition from an area of operation to a point of origin.⁶

General - The term used by Clausewitz to symbolize the military of a country. Generally used within the context of "the General," "the Statesman," and "the People." See also, "Political Trinity," and "Intelligence."

Intelligence - Also "Intelligence Analyst" or "Analyst." The term used to identify the source authority for representing the enemy's point of view. For the purposes of this thesis, a fourth entity complimenting "the General," "the Statesman," and "the People," which gives insight to analytical considerations characterizing strategic decision making.

Military Objective - The derived set of military actions to be taken to implement National Command Authorities guidance in support of national objectives. Defines the results to be achieved by the military and assigns tasks to commanders.⁷

Military Options - A range of military force responses that can be projected to accomplish assigned tasks. Options include one or a combination of the following: civic action, humanitarian assistance, civil affairs, and other military activities to develop positive relations to develop positive relationships with other countries; confidence building and other measures to reduce military tensions; military presence; activities to convey threats to adversaries and truth projections; military deceptions and psychological operations; quarantines, blockades, and harassment operations; raids; intervention operations; armed conflict involving air, land, maritime and strategic warfare operations;

⁶There is no doctrinal definition of "exit strategy" within the United States Government. The definition provided here is for the purposes of this thesis.

⁷JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, under "military objective."

support for law enforcement authorities to counter international criminal activities (terrorism, narcotics trafficking, slavery, and piracy); support for law enforcement authorities to suppress domestic rebellion; and support for insurgencies, counterinsurgency, and civil war in foreign countries.⁸

National Objectives - The aims, derived from national goals and interests, toward which a national policy or strategy is directed and efforts and resources of the nation are applied.⁹

National Policy - The broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives.¹⁰

National Power - The tangible and intangible resources that a nation may use to influence another nation or situation.

National Strategy - The art and science of developing and using the diplomatic, economic, and informational powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war to secure national objectives. Also called national security strategy or grand strategy.¹¹

People - The term used by Clausewitz to symbolize the people of a country. Generally used within the context of "the General," "the Statesman," and "the People." See also, "political trinity," and "Intelligence."

⁸JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, under "military options."

⁹JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, under "national objectives."

¹⁰JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, under "national policy."

¹¹JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, under "national strategy."

Statesman - The term used by Clausewitz to symbolize the political leader of a country. Generally used within the context of "the General," "the Statesman," and "the People." See also, "political trinity," and "Intelligence."

Strategic Concept - The course of action accepted as the result of the estimate of the strategic situation. It is a statement of what is to be done in broad terms sufficiently flexible to permit its use in framing the military, diplomatic, economic, psychological and other measures which stem from it.¹²

Strategy - The art and science of developing and using political, economic, psychological, and military forces as necessary during peace and war, to afford the maximum support to policies, in order to increase the probabilities and favorable consequences of victory and to lessen the chances of defeat.¹³

Trinity, Remarkable - The three elements or tendencies of war: primordial violence, hatred and enmity; of the play of chance and probability; and it's element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.¹⁴ Erroneously thought to mean "the General," "the Statesman," and "the People."¹⁵

Trinity, Political - A term used for the purposes of this thesis to mean "the General," "the Statesman," and "the People."

¹²JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, under "strategic concept."

¹³JCS, Joint Pub 1-02, under "strategy."

¹⁴Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 89.

¹⁵Edward J. Villacres and Christopher Bassford. "Reclaiming the Clausewitzian Trinity," *Parameters* (Autumn, 1995), 9.

These terms tend to be either misunderstood or misused and the definitions provided above will help the reader better follow the intent of the ensuing discussion.

IMPORTANCE TO THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Casualty producing gaps between policy and strategy adversely reflect on the General and the Statesman ultimately eroding their credibility and public's trust. Intelligence bears the responsibility of informing policy but the experience in Vietnam suggests that the absence of an easily identifiable analytical framework for conducting a pre-deployment analysis of a regional target contributed to policy failure. This thesis is a modest effort toward developing a mature framework for anticipating the intelligence issues inherent in strategic contingency planning.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

Sound regional intelligence appraisals provide for an efficient and effective use of national power with minimum risk. Credible expressions of United States national power require an air of competence and professionalism for instilling a healthy respect among the belligerents and bystanders. Pyrrhic victories undermine long-term capability and barbarian success does not engender postwar stature. The United States cannot afford self-inflicted meat grinder operations characterizing the wasteful doctrines of World War I, many aspects of the Russian and Japanese doctrines of World War II, or the human

wave assaults of Korea. Conversely, we cannot afford the postwar political repercussions of the unconstrained use of raw power. Neither extreme warrants the public trust and both jeopardize legitimacy. Effective and efficient use of United States military power requires a guiding intelligence that can fully inform the General not only of the enemy opposing him, but the environment within which he must operate. Frequent and successful political use of austere military assets necessitates first battle success on a no notice, come as you are basis. For both the General and the Statesman to be successful, they must first understand the strategic environment in which they are to fight. This is where Intelligence makes its major contribution.

SEQUENCE OF COVERAGE

Chapter 1, "Overview," provides the background to the nature of the problem and identifies the research question at issue: What pre-deployment intelligence assessments should be made prior to committing U.S. military forces abroad? The chapter further describes the methodology for the conduct of the research and the organization of the paper.

Chapter 2, "Setting the Stage: Vietnam and Clausewitz" summarizes the strategic lessons learned from Vietnam and extracts policy intelligence considerations from Clausewitz. These two separate assessments set the stage for the development of an analytical framework in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3, "Development of a Clausewitzian Framework for Strategic Policy Intelligence," integrates the Clausewitzian framework and the lessons learned from Chapter 2 and constructs an analytical framework composed of seven subsections:

- a. Problem Identification;
- b. Interests Analysis;
- c. Objective and End State Identification;
- d. Strategic Appraisal;
- e. National Power Assessment;
- f. Strategy Development; and,
- g. Identification and Elimination of Gaps.

Each section discusses intelligence considerations that, had they been incorporated during the Vietnam War as part of a strategic horizontal analysis, would have provided a framework for analysis that was at that time not available.

Chapter 4, "A Clausewitzian Framework for Strategic Policy Intelligence," is the final form of the framework suitable for use as a deskside reference for strategic analysts.

Chapter 5, "Conclusions" address the principal findings which will state that the analytical frame work derived from this study is a suitable point of departure for a strategic analyst examining pre-deployment issues, a baseline for intelligence agency team and branch chiefs responsible for regional target development, as well as a course of instruction for military intelligence analyst.

CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE STAGE: VIETNAM AND CLAUSEWITZ

War plans cover every aspect of a war, and weave them all into a single operation that must have a single, ultimate objective in which all particular aims are reconciled. No one starts a war - or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so - without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter is its operational objective. This is the governing principle which will set its course, prescribe the scale of the means and effort which is required, and make its influence felt throughout down to the smallest operational detail.

Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*

AMERICA STUMBLES

America's military and diplomatic performance during the Vietnam War was characterized by a strategy-policy mismatch. Without effective deliberation, the United States embroiled itself in a unsuccessful war resulting in the unnecessary loss of 57,000 American lives. The strategy-policy process failed and the absence of an effective, supporting, policy intelligence process contributed to this failure. A strategic review of the American participation in the Vietnam War serves as a basis for understanding the scope of this failure.

THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

American involvement in Vietnam can be traced to the United States's response to North Korea's June 1950 invasion of South Korea. North Korea's attack took American policy planners by surprise and there was little time to develop a well thought-out strategy in advance of committing troops to battle. Against a backdrop of an increasingly hostile Communist bloc, American decision makers perceived Korea to be the first in a series of international encroachments against non-communist interests. Secretary of State Dean Acheson recommended to President Harry S. Truman that the United States commit naval and air forces to South Korea, position the Seventh Fleet between Formosa and China, reinforce our forward bases in the Philippines, and provide a military mission to the French in Indochina.¹⁶ The mission to French Indochina set the stage for a major strategy-policy mismatch for America's subsequent involvement in South Vietnam.

Once the United States entered into the fighting in South Vietnam, there developed serious disagreements between civilian and military leaders concerning the use of force in the Vietnam War. While the United States' policy of retaining a viable non-communist government in South Vietnam remained constant throughout the war, the United States entered into Vietnam without a clear set of objectives, or a clear

¹⁶Robert J. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1949-1953* (University of Missouri Press, 1996), 206-207.

understanding of the underlying problems, their relationship to our national interests, or the regional and moral forces at play.¹⁷

Without a sound strategy derived from such an assessment, the administration of President John F. Kennedy entered into the Southeast Asian arena which an unprepared Johnson administration chose to fight. The disagreements between the civilian and military leaders over the use of force were, in large part, symptomatic of the government's failure to develop a sound strategy derived from a careful assessment of the origins and implications of the war.

Kennedy saw the problem in Southeast Asia in a political light and envisioned a counter insurgency doctrine to contain perceived Soviet expansion. The Army, however, resisted the President and never pursued the doctrinal changes that would have supported the President's policy.¹⁸ When the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson assumed responsibility for the war, both Johnson and the Army saw the war in Vietnam in a military light with the result that "both the military and the civilian policy makers misread the nature of the conflict. Both groups were looking, for their own reasons, at a revolutionary insurgency that they felt could be controlled, through application of the Army (conventional war) Concept or limited war deterrence theory."¹⁹

¹⁷Jeffery J. Clark. "On Strategy and the Vietnam War," *Parameters* (Winter, 1986), 39.

¹⁸Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 456-458.

¹⁹Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1979), 96.

Johnson, not wanting to be the first President to lose a war and not wanting to derail his domestic programs, "made the worst possible choice: He would fight - not to win, but only not to lose."²⁰ This resulted in a series of quiet, low-keyed decisions increasing the U.S. presence in Southeast Asia.²¹ The result was almost imperceptible piecemeal troop increase designed to avoid arousing the American public and having to ask Congress for a declaration of war or a resolution mobilizing the reserves.²²

This piecemeal increase in troops obviated the apparent need of a "high command" with the result that, below the President, there was no one specific person or organization dealing with the Vietnam conflict having the authority to integrate all government actions into meaningful policy.²³ This resulted in the Army assuming responsibility for only the ground war strategy.

Intellectually unprepared and doctrinally unwilling to conduct the counterinsurgency operations necessary to defeat Mao's three-phased insurgency model, the Army sought "to bring the enemy to battle on our terms," resulting in a war of attrition that favored North Vietnam.²⁴ This led to Army demands for steadily increasing

²⁰Richard Nixon, *No More Vietnams* (New York: Arbor House, 1985), 78.

²¹Gabriel Kolko, *Anatomy of a War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 164 - 165.

²²Harry G. Summers Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1982), 50.

²³Summers, 200.

²⁴Krepinevich, 36-37.

manpower and requests for greater authority to attack North Vietnam which, although opposed by Secretary of Defense McNamara, was supported by President Johnson.²⁵

The bombing campaign, directed from Hawaii by Admiral U.S. Grant Sharp, initially complemented the Army's attrition strategy and satisfied the politicians' preference for attacking the perceived heart of enemy operations, hopefully sending a signal to Hanoi.

However, as the ineffectiveness of the pin-prick bombing against Hanoi's supply lines grew more apparent, coupled with the limitations that the weather imposed on the number of sorties and the inherent inaccuracy of conventional bombing, optimism faded.²⁶ As losses increased it became clear that the attrition strategy had backfired and the war was now costing more than the nation could economically and politically afford.²⁷

The military and diplomatic turning point of the war came during Tet 1968, when General William C. Westmoreland's request for 206,000 more troops electrified the civilian leadership in the Pentagon forcing a reappraisal of Army strategy and prompting major public figures such as Presidents Dwight D. Eisenhower and Harry S. Truman, and General of the Army Omar N. Bradley to call for a rethinking of the basic strategy saying that the war could not be won from the air and could be lost on the ground.²⁸

²⁵Krepinevich, 152.

²⁶Townsend Hoopes, *The Limits of Intervention* (New York: David McKay Company, 1969), 77.

²⁷Kolko, 286 - 287.

²⁸Hoopes, 165.

The lack of a coherent strategy resulted in the war disintegrating into "three separate, or only loosely related struggles" consisting of "the large scale conventional war of U.S. armored brigades, massed helicopters, and unopposed tactical air support; ... the confused pacification effort," and the "curiously remote air war against North Vietnam."²⁹

The Army's conventional warfare mindset caused it to take over the war from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and neglect the nation building that characterized the pacification program. However, the conventional war approach was handicapped by the graduated response strategy which allowed the North Vietnamese to absorb losses and adapt to the changing pressures of the war. The United States policy permitting sanctuaries aided the North Vietnamese logistical buildup in the south while permitting them staging areas to which they could withdraw under pressure. Clearly, there was a strategy-policy disconnect accelerating America's downward spiral toward strategic policy failure.

As a result of this failure, Presidents Johnson and Nixon, Secretaries of Defense McNamara and Clifford, and National Security Advisor Kissinger recorded their memoirs and, with the exception of President Johnson, described their strategic policy observations and lesson learned. Those observations and lessons learned are contained in Appendix A, Summary of American Strategic Policy Lessons Learned.

By themselves, these observations and lessons learned do not rise to the level of a framework suitable for providing meaningful intelligence support to strategic, wartime, policy development. They do, however, suggest assessments that should be considered

²⁹Hoopes, 61-62.

within the context of a larger analytical framework that incorporates policy intelligence considerations. Such a framework did not exist during Vietnam and this thesis proposes to construct such a tool.

The vehicle to be used for constructing the underlying framework will be the writings of Carl von Clausewitz. His views heavily influence U.S. military doctrine and it is essential to first explore his basic work, *On War*.

THE INTELLIGENCE ASPECTS OF CLAUSEWITZ

Clausewitz's early 19th century observations were made when intelligence had yet to develop as a separate, professional discipline. As a result, Clausewitz, interestingly, devotes only a three paragraph chapter to a category of intelligence that today we call tactical. Essentially, he says, "intelligence reports in war are contradictory; even more are false, and most are uncertain." Accordingly commanders are better off trusting their intuition and being "guided by the laws of probability."³⁰ In the context of Clausewitz's time, that may have been sage advice. However, in the 21st Century, Clausewitz's other observations outlining the roles and responsibilities of the Statesman and the General provide the basis for strategic policy intelligence.

In defining the roles of military and civilian leaders in the formulation and execution of a nation's foreign policy and military strategy, Clausewitz identified three areas of responsibility: violence and passion (the province of the people); uncertainty,

³⁰Clausewitz, 117.

chance and probability (the province of the General); and political purpose and effect (the province of the Statesman). While he did not explore the first area of responsibility to any measurable degree, Clausewitz did hold that the realm of policy is directly influenced by the Statesman and the General.

Policy is the province of the Statesman. The Statesman seeking to influence another nation to do his own nation's will must weigh the available forms of leverage selecting the ones best suited for diplomatic gains. If diplomatic (including economic) leverage fails, or if the tempo of international political events preclude an orderly application of a diplomatic option, the use or threat of use of military power may be appropriate.

In Clausewitz's view, "(t)he first, the supreme, the most far reaching act of judgment that the statesman and the commander have to make is to establish...the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive."³¹

Following that, the Statesman "must identify and specify what effects are desired," which instrument of national power should be used and to what degree.³² In effect, the Statesman must identify the political objective, establish the criteria for success, and identify what actions are necessary to reach that objective.

³¹Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 88-89.

³²B.M. Simpson III, "The Essential Clausewitz," *Thinking About War: A Survey of Military Theory*, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, undated, 2-9.

As an instrument of national power, the General does not concern himself with the political aspects of policy making. Policy development lies outside the General's compartmented area of interest and he subordinates himself to the will and policy designs of the Statesman. So that the Statesman can make informed decisions, the General serves as the Statesman's advisor with regard to the military aspects of the Statesman's political decisions. The General's advice is not purely military; it is given within the political framework laid down by the Statesman.

If the General is not the commander-in-chief, he should serve in the Statesman's cabinet so that the Cabinet can take advantage of the General's advice. The intent is for the cabinet to participate in military decisions rather than the General participating in political decisions.³³ This lays the foundation for the Statesman, through the cabinet, to integrate and coordinate the General's activities with the Statesman's other initiatives to reinforce the pressure being applied to the target country and, if necessary, allocate national resources to support military operations.

In assessing the nature and the amount of the military means to be brought to bear against an enemy, the Statesman and the General make four assessments: the scale of the political demands at issue; the condition and situation of the belligerents; the enemy's resolve, capabilities, and character; and, the impact of the other states.³⁴

It is the Statesman's role to assess the scale of the political demands and choose whether or not war is in the national interest. In doing so, he examines relative national

³³Clausewitz, 608.

³⁴Clausewitz, 586.

power: the conditions and situations of both friendly and hostile governments that will influence the size of his military commitment. The Statesman makes a political determination of the adequacy of his forces: are they sufficient to protect the national vital interests or project the national will, and if not, how will he close the gap between policy and means? He also decides to what degree of force and to what point he should press the enemy to secure compliance with his aims. Finally, the Statesman ensures that his position is sufficiently secure so that other states will not intervene against him.³⁵

The determination of the enemy's resolve, his capabilities, and character are assessed jointly by the Statesman and the General. The Statesman assesses the political aspects of the enemy (national strength, alliances, and domestic cohesion) and the General assesses the military aspects of the enemy (size, composition, and capabilities). Then the two confer and arrive at a viable course of action for the Statesman. In effect, the Statesman and the General conduct an internal strategic appraisal of their own national condition, a national powers assessment comparing friendly and enemy forces, and devise a strategy for defeating the enemy.

The Statesman's goal is to gain control over an adversary for a specific reason and war serves as a direct method to achieve that end. "The political object of war can be of two kinds; either to totally destroy the adversary, to eliminate his existence as a State, or else to prescribe peace terms to him."³⁶

³⁵Clausewitz, 597.

³⁶Michael Howard, *Clausewitz* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 16.

The Statesman may choose open, limited, or other forms of war and depending on the intent of the Statesman, the General must be prepared to accept partial mobilization of either the military or other national assets, limited goals, or self-sacrifice as rational missions if suited to rational policy.³⁷ This modification of the military objective in support of political goals is a political decision made by the Statesman.³⁸

Taking the view that war is a continuation of diplomacy by violent means and is another form of diplomatic leverage, Clausewitz concludes that since all the major components of war are politically driven or are so closely aligned with policy, decisions concerning military force become political in nature.³⁹ In this case the Statesman uses the General to send his diplomatic messages.⁴⁰

When the decision is made to go to war, it is done in pursuit of the Statesman's goals. The political object is the object of the war. The Statesman identifies the objective and should provide a clear definition of his political purpose and goals. In doing so, the Statesman should have an appreciation of the demands the war will make on the national will and the national capacity from the first step to the last.⁴¹ He should know what he wants to achieve by going to war and that this will directly influence the size and scope of

³⁷Peter Paret, editor. *Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 201.

³⁸Clausewitz, 602.

³⁹Clausewitz, 605.

⁴⁰Clausewitz, 590.

⁴¹Clausewitz, 584.

the national commitment.⁴² In making these decisions, the Statesman solicits the advice of his General.

To determine the proper amount of military power necessary to accomplish his specific purpose, the Statesman must know what the General can accomplish; what the results or political effects of the General's victory or defeat on the battlefield will be; and not to demand or expect from the military something that it cannot deliver under existing constraints and restraints.⁴³

What the General can accomplish depends on the cooperative efforts of both the Statesman and the General. Together they plan, conduct, and tailor the war effort to the objectives and the available logistics to ensure that the General is not over- or under-committing his forces.⁴⁴ The General must tell the Statesman what war can or cannot achieve and what the costs to the state are going to be in men and material.⁴⁵ Thus, if the Statesman makes demands of the General, he should be able to provide the General the resources to accommodate those demands. Otherwise, the Statesman's political aim outstrips the General's military capacity and creates gaps between the chosen policy and the military capability.⁴⁶ This is perhaps the most critical of the joint assessments between

⁴²Clausewitz, 579.

⁴³Simpson, 2-8.

⁴⁴Clausewitz, 177.

⁴⁵Simpson, 2-8.

⁴⁶Clausewitz, 608.

the Statesman and the General: determining if there is a gap between the political aim and the military means.

The General's battlefield operations should be characterized by a balanced application of force sufficient to cause the enemy to submit to the Statesman's will. A balanced application of military force, rather than absolute war, is an important characteristic in weighing the political effects of the General's victory. If the General conducts undisciplined or independent operations, he may exceed the Statesman's political purpose, thereby hindering the Statesman's efforts to create a favorable diplomatic condition. To preclude this, "the Statesman (must)...constantly clarify the object of the war as it proceeds and the General must insist that he do so."⁴⁷ In addition to insisting that the Statesman clarify his goals, the General must ask questions designed to accommodate the achievement of the mission while focusing on the Statesman's strategic goals, objectives, and the national capacity to support the war.⁴⁸

In Clausewitz's view, the proper role of the General and the Statesman in the formulation and execution of a nation's foreign policy and military strategy is one in which the Statesman generally reigns supreme over the General. While their inter-relationships are synergistic, the Statesman defines and protects national interests while the General assists in providing the Statesman the diplomatic and military options best suited to projecting the national will.

⁴⁷Simpson, 2-7.

⁴⁸Clausewitz, 607.

THE POLICY INTELLIGENCE IMPLICATIONS OF CLAUSEWITZ

The above summary of Clausewitz outlines broad roles and responsibilities of the Statesman and the General. In doing so, he provides a loose framework for conducting strategic policy and mission analysis. To illustrate, a restated Clausewitz prescribes:

- a. Objective Identification - identifying the kind of war on which one is embarking.

This involves identification of the political object which may take one or two forms: totally destroy the enemy or prescribe peace terms to him. Implicit in the identification of the objective is the identification of the criteria for success and the identification of the actions necessary to achieve that objective.

- b. Strategic Appraisals - identifying the scale of the political demands necessary to achieve the objective. This is primarily an internal assessment of one's own nation. To identify the scale of the political demands necessary to achieve the objectives, the Statesman must assess the demands on the national will, the demands on the national capacity, and the scale of means necessary to reach the objective. In order to complete the strategic appraisal, Intelligence must also conduct a national power assessment of allied and enemy forces for national strength comparisons to identify whether the internal political demands necessary to overcome the opposing belligerent can be met.

- c. National Power Assessment - a comparative analysis of belligerents assessing their resolve, character, cohesion, size, composition, capabilities as well as the impact of other states.

d. Strategy Development - Identification of the sources of enemy strength, development of a plan to concentrate attacks on those sources, and do so "with the utmost speed."⁴⁹

e. Identification and closure of the gaps between policy and means - Identifying what the war can and cannot do and, where necessary, closing the gaps by modifying the object or the means.

The preceding discussion identifies five major areas of consideration: objective identification, strategic appraisals, national power assessments, strategy development, and the identification and closure of gaps. However, the framework is incomplete.

This model begins with objective identification but there must necessarily be a prior consideration warranting the establishment of a political objective. States waging war in the pursuit of objectives do so to advance their own interests. The sensitivity of an interest or the severity of a threat to an interest is the motive for conflict. This requires an appreciation for the true interests at stake. Before Objective Identification, one must conduct an Interests Analysis identifying the specific interest(s) at issue so that an appropriate objective may be identified.

Stepping back further, issues adversely affecting interests are the sources of concern for the Statesman. These issues are, in the vernacular, called, "Problems." Understanding the adverse conditions affecting interests is Problem Identification and the intent of Objective Identification is to resolve problems favorably.

⁴⁹Clausewitz, 617.

Thus, the framework takes the following form: problem identification, interests analysis, objective identification, strategic appraisal, and national power assessments, strategy development and the identification and closure of gaps.

The framework, however, is still incomplete. It is not a closed loop. Objective identification focuses on solving a problem within the context of national interests. The identification and closure of gaps addresses the feasibility of accomplishing the objective given the constraints of one's own strategic situation, the relative national power of all players and the application of a strategy to achieve the objective. The missing element is whether the achieved objective produces a favorable end state to keep the original or subsequent problems from resurfacing. The last element in this framework is an end state assessment.

As will be argued in the next Chapter, end state considerations should be incorporated into objective identification for mature policy planning. As a result, the analytical framework proposed by this thesis takes the following form: problem identification, interests analysis, objective and end state identification, strategic appraisal, national power assessments, strategy development, and identification and closure of gaps.

In the next chapter, we fortify the framework with analytical considerations derived from the lessons learned from Vietnam.

CHAPTER 3

A CLAUSEWITIZIAN FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC POLICY INTELLIGENCE

There was a nearly incomprehensible misconception about the nature of the military problem. Lacking criteria for judgment, officials often misunderstood, and therefore often misstated, the issues.

Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*

This chapter develops an analytical framework derived from both Clausewitz and the lessons learned from the Vietnam War. The framework is comprised of seven parts: problem identification, interests analysis, objective and end state identification, strategic appraisal, national power assessments, strategy development, and identification and closure of gaps.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Kissinger points out that one of the American policy planning failures during the Vietnam War was the failure to accurately identify and understand the conflict's underlying problem. In the early 1950s, "the top East Asia and China experts in the State Department - John Paton Davis, Jr., John Stewart Service and John Carter Vincent..." were purged

during the McCarthy Hearings effectively denying the National Command Authority of their insight.⁵⁰ The effects of this purge meant that no one was analyzing the war and providing insight into the enemy's perspective.⁵¹ Compounding this mistake, neither Kennedy nor Johnson ever conducted a policy review to determine if the rationale for United States participation in the conflict was sound enough to warrant the commitment of U.S. troops.⁵² The absence of a clear definition of the underlying problem caused the American allies to send troops only reluctantly because they did not see Vietnam in the same light as did the Americans.⁵³

McNamara stresses that even if a problem is identified, solving it may not always be possible. Americans failed "to appreciate that some problems do not have an immediate solution."⁵⁴ He further reinforced this observation as a lesson learned saying, "acknowledge that some problems in international affairs have no solution, particularly no military solution."⁵⁵

⁵⁰Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1995), 32-33.

⁵¹James R. Arnold, *The First Domino: Eisenhower, the Military and America's Intervention in Vietnam* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991), 385-386.

⁵²Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1994), 657.

⁵³Clark Clifford, *Counsel to the President* (New York: Random House, 1991), 449-452.

⁵⁴McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 321-323.

⁵⁵Robert S. McNamara, *Argument Without End: In Search of Answers to the Vietnam Tragedy* (New York: Public Affairs, 1999), 392-396.

Problem identification involves identifying the underlying issues which adversely affect a specific interest. The underlying problem in Vietnam was misidentified as communist expansion instead of Vietnamese nationalism. In this case, Vietnamese nationalism posed a different threat to U.S. interests than that believed posed by hegemonic communism. Having a clear definition of the underlying problem provides clarity for assessing the threat to the affected interest and sets the stage for a rational, well thought out response.

The three traditional interests are political, economic and military and Kissinger notes that the possibility exists that the problems affecting any of these interests may not have a solution, "particularly no military solution."⁵⁶

Since Vietnam, two additional categories of problems have emerged warranting inclusion in this thesis: psychological problems and problems of national conscience. These are problems that ultimately are not linked to a specific interest but tug at the American psyche. As Ernest van den Haag notes in *Foreign Affairs*:

American foreign policy makers have been easily persuaded to involve the United States even when no specific American interests were at stake. They appear to share a naive belief that American ideals can and should solve all the problems of the world and that it is their mission to actively apply these ideals abroad....Many problems have no solutions at all, not even unjust ones; at most they can be managed, prevented from getting worse or from spreading to wider areas. Other problems are best left to simmer in benign neglect until the parties are disposed to settle them.⁵⁷

⁵⁶McNamara, *Argument Without End*, 395.

⁵⁷Ernest van den Haag, "The Busyness of American Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1985): 113-114.

Edward Peck, a former Chief of Mission to Iraq, provides a useful rule of thumb for clarifying problems suggesting that problems invariably fall into one of three categories: unilateral, multilateral, and nonlateral. Unilateral issues are “our problems” which affect specific and direct U.S. interests and as such should be articulable or describable in common terms of understanding. Multilateral issues are “ours and our allies problems” affecting the direct interests of the U.S. and some other ally and the interests are identifiable, articulable, and describable. Nonlateral issues are “their problems” which do not affect any specific U.S. interest because, “it is their problem, not ours.” Intelligence should not underestimate the Statesman’s propensity for executing the mental gymnastics to make “their” problem “our” problem.⁵⁸

These observations have analytical implications for Intelligence support to policy. First, there should be an accurate identification of the problem. The problem, not the symptoms of the problem, or the international manifestations of the problem, but the underlying nature of the problem must be accurately identified. In the case of Vietnam, the underlying problem was a nationalistic desire for reunification. The Americans saw only the expansion of monolithic communism and failed to respond effectively. Intelligence has to get past the emotional and political fog and ask “What is the long-term underlying problem?”

The second assessment should clearly identify whose problem it is. Interested parties in a problem may have an actual interest while others may engineer perceived

⁵⁸ Peck, Edward L., former Chief of Mission, Baghdad, Iraq, interview by the author, 4 April 2002.

ownership and take action. Is the problem affecting actual interests or is someone simply interested?

The purpose of the third assessment is to identify belligerents' and interested non-belligerents' perspectives of the underlying problem and then compare them to the U.S. perception of the problem. If allies share the U.S. perspective on a problem, the definition of the problem may be accurate. The lack of consensus on the exact nature of a problem suggests that there may not be a sufficiently firm basis for a well thought out response.

The fourth assessment seeks to categorize the problem. Is the problem a unilateral, multilateral or non lateral problem? If it is a unilateral or multilateral problem it involves the U.S. (unilateral) or the U.S. and an Ally (multilateral) and tends to be a diplomatic, economic or a military problems. If it a non-lateral problem, it is not an inherent U.S. problem but more likely a psychological problem or a problem of national conscience that causes such angst that the U.S. would probably intrude to satisfy some constituency's psychological needs.

The fifth assessment is identify how this problem affects the specific interests of individual belligerents so that an estimation can be made of how and to what extent the belligerent is likely to react.

Analytical Considerations for Problem Identification

These assessments serve as the basic steps in problem identification. They may be summarized as follows.⁵⁹

What is the underlying problem as viewed from the perspective of each belligerent and interested non-belligerent? Whose problem is it? Is the American perception of the problem shared by potential allies? Is the problem under consideration a political, economic, military, psychological problem, a problem of national conscience or a combination of problems? How does this problem affect specific belligerent's interests?

INTERESTS ANALYSIS

The next process after problem identification is to assess how a problem affects the interests of belligerents and interested non-belligerents. Statesmen should conduct an interests analysis. However, Intelligence should independently assess U.S. interests to determine if the Statesman and Intelligence perceive the threat the same way. If so, planning should go forward. If not, Intelligence bears responsibility for informing the Statesman that a flawed perception of the interests at issue is the initial point of departure for subsequent flawed policy development.

⁵⁹The format used for the presentation of each of the seven analytical considerations is derived from the format used by Hans Morgenthau in his book, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*.

Clarke observed that America should not commit her forces to war unless "our national security is threatened."⁶⁰ Additionally, America's allies did not perceive the regional threat the same way as did the United States.⁶¹ This suggests that, at least in Clarke's mind, a retrospective of Vietnam reveals that U.S. national security was, in fact, not threatened and that the threat North Vietnam was posing to South Vietnam did not necessarily equate to a generalized regional threat as envisioned by the United States.

Without forming or expressing an opinion on the actual case, Clarke's observation is sufficient to remind us that intelligence analysts supporting policymakers should be able to point out what specific interest is at issue and whether the threat is credible. This will be critical when gauging the scale of means necessary to respond to the threat.

Understanding interests requires, at a minimum, an understanding of a country's and a region's geography, history, culture and politics and how they combine into issues affecting the well being of the people and their government. However, that detailed knowledge about North and South Vietnam, as well as South East Asia, did not exist within the Executive Branch to the degree necessary for informed policy to be developed and translated into a meaningful strategy.⁶²

Four seminal American writers provide Intelligence with a nuanced appreciation of U.S. interests: George F. Kennan, Hans J. Morgenthau, Donald E. Neuchterlein and Michael G. Roskin.

⁶⁰Clifford, 613.

⁶¹Clifford, 450-452.

⁶²McNamara, *In Retrospect*. 321-323.

Kennan tells us that "the interests of the national society for which government has to concern itself are basically those of its military security, the integrity of its political life, and the well being of its people."⁶³ An understanding of those interests is useful for determining which lever of power is more appropriate for a given situation.

Morgenthau and Neuchterlein provide two competing views for defining interests. Morgenthau envisioned two interests: vital and secondary.⁶⁴ Using this standard, any serious threat becomes a go-to-war scenario because serious threats are likely to be assessed as a threat to a vital interest. Vietnam, interpreted by some through Morgenthau's framework, became an issue of vital interest.

Neuchterlein provides a more flexible framework for defining U.S. interests. He defines four: defense of the United States and its constitutional systems; economic well-being; creation of a favorable world order, and promotion of U.S. democratic values and the free market system. He ascribes to these interests four intensities: survival issues, vital issues, major issues, and peripheral issues.⁶⁵

Vietnam, using Neuchterlein's matrix, could have been categorized as a major world order interest as opposed to a vital interest providing planners more flexibility in defensive discussions. Significantly, Neuchterlein's model allows Intelligence to more

⁶³George F. Kennan, "Morality and Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs* (Winter 1985/86): 206.

⁶⁴Hans J. Morgenthau, *The Impasse of American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 191.

⁶⁵Donald E. Neuchterlein, *National Interests and Presidential Leadership: The Setting of Priorities* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), 1-17.

precisely define the nature and the intensity of the interest at issue and recognize when power is being inappropriately applied.

Roskin's model helps further define the nature of the threat by identifying four categories of national interest: importance (vital and secondary), duration (temporary and permanent), specificity (specific and general), compatibility (complementary and conflicting).⁶⁶ Where students of Morgenthau may have assessed Vietnam as a vital issue, students of Nuechterlein may have asked whether it was a vital or a major world order or ideological issue, while students of Roskin may have asked what the specific and general American interests in South East Asia were, and whether they were temporary or permanent.

Analysts should be able to identify all U.S. interests in a region with sufficient specificity that they can cite the specific U.S. interest at issue and advise when U.S. power is being inappropriately applied or when its application begins to have negative effects.

Once Intelligence has conducted a U.S. interests analysis, it should repeat the process from the enemy's standpoint to identify respective survival, vital, major, and peripheral diplomatic, economic and military interests. Sources for identifying these interests may come from historical pronouncements in past conflicts, public declarations prior to the outbreak of hostilities or other information collected by intelligence. Ultimately, Intelligence should identify the competing and complementary interests

⁶⁶Michael G. Roskin, "National Interest: From Abstraction to Strategy," *Parameters* (Winter 1994 - 1995): 4-18.

between and among the belligerents and interested bystanders as a means for understanding what is at stake for each party.

Analytical Considerations for Interests Analysis

The above assessments serve as the basic intelligence questions for interests analysis. They may be summarized as follows.

What are the belligerents' survival, vital, major, peripheral and other diplomatic, economic and military interests in the region? What are their specific interests in this problem? What is the specific U.S. interest involved in this problem? How does this problem affect American survival, vital, major, peripheral and other diplomatic, economic, and military interests? What is the specific threat to U.S. interests? Is this a conflict between the United States interests and the interests of some other, significant, third party? How will this conflict affect each of the interests of the belligerents? To what extent do the interests of others compliment or conflict with U.S. interests?

OBJECTIVE AND END STATE IDENTIFICATION

Kissinger points out that there was a failure to conduct a policy review to determine if "the military and political objectives on behalf of which America had already invested so much were attainable, by what means, and over what period of time, indeed, of whether the premises which had generated these commitments were even correct."⁶⁷

⁶⁷Kissinger, 657.

Clifford tells us that "(T)he basic questions, 'Can the war be won?,' 'What do we have to do to win?,' 'What is our purpose?,' 'What is achievable?' were never specifically answered."⁶⁸ Both men are telling us that in Vietnam, a sound strategic objective was never identified.

Strategic objectives take two forms: destroy the enemy or prescribe peace terms to him. Generally, the destruction of the enemy is rarely sought. The closest modern application of that objective was the defeat of WWII Germany and Japan. Germany was reduced to ruins because Hitler remained resolute and would not accept peace terms. Japan narrowly escaped similar destruction because the Emperor acquiesced to prescribed peace terms: unconditional surrender.

American war aims have generally focused not on the destruction of the enemy but on the reduction of his resolve to the point where he will subscribe to our peace terms. In Vietnam, the U.S. deliberately chose not to destroy North Vietnam but failed to identify a successful strategy to achieve the second objective: sufficiently reducing North Vietnam's will so that it would accept prescribed peace terms.

Objective identification implies three additional steps: the identification of a desired end state, the identification of success criteria, and the identification of the actions necessary to achieve the objective. However, before pursuing desired end states, success criteria and the actions necessary to achieve the objective, it is necessary to address the term "center of gravity."

⁶⁸Clifford, 415-416, 485, *passim*.

Centers of Gravity

Clausewitz states that "one must keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind. Out of these characteristics, a certain center of gravity develops, the hub of all power and movement which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed."⁶⁹ To find a center of gravity, Clausewitz states that one traces "the ultimate substance of enemy strength... back to the fewest possible sources, and ideally to one alone" and that source be attacked.⁷⁰

William W. Mendel and Lamar Tooke, writing for *Military Review*, offer the analyst important criteria for evaluating the validity for a center of gravity and deserve to be quoted at length:

"If I desire to impose my will upon this center of gravity, will that action create a cascading, deteriorating effect on morale, cohesion and will to fight that prevents my enemy from achieving his aims and allows the achievement of my own? Further, if I have selected a valid center of gravity, do I have a feasible ability to impose my will over it?"⁷¹

Lawrence L. Izzo, in an earlier *Military Review* article, suggests the following analytical considerations for assessing a center of gravity: the center of gravity, as concentration of strength, is the best target for attack; the center of gravity is not an enemy weakness, and a vulnerable weakness is not a center of gravity; the enemy's center

⁶⁹Clausewitz, 595 - 596.

⁷⁰Clausewitz, 617.

⁷¹William W. Mendel and Lamar Tooke. "Operational Logic: Selecting the Center of Gravity," *Military Review* (June 1993): 5.

of gravity is the essence of his combat power pursuing a specific objective; and, each level of war has a different center of gravity.⁷²

Milan Vego, also writing for *Military Review*, suggests that there may be multiple centers of gravity at the tactical and operational levels of war and fewer and more significant centers of gravity at the strategic level of war.⁷³ Armed with the concept of a center of gravity, the analyst now looks at end states, success criteria and the actions necessary to achieve the objective.

End State

Every war must end; it is the logical consequence of either victory, defeat or stalemate. Kissinger states that a lesson learned from Vietnam is that planners should have "a clear military strategy with a clear definition of success."⁷⁴ This suggests that war planners should have recognizable conditions for knowing when the objective has been achieved.

Knowing the recognizable conditions for when the objective has been achieved helps set the stage for a sound exit strategy. Currently, there is a doctrinal void within the Department of Defense on the development of exits strategies and as an interim measure, Intelligence should at least be asking, depending on the individual situation, what the

⁷²Lawrence L. Izzo, LTC. "The Center of Gravity is Not An Achilles Heel," *Military Review* (January 1988): 76-77.

⁷³Milan Vego. "Center of Gravity," *Military Review* (April - March 2000): 26.

⁷⁴Kissinger, 700.

recognizable conditions should be for knowing when to exit, whether there is a transition process identified, and whether there is congruency between the military and political conditions for withdrawal and disengagement.⁷⁵

End state discussions are predominately the purview of the Statesman and the General, but Intelligence plays a role in representing the enemy point of view and identifying flaws in end state strategy development. Intelligence serves as the Statesman and the General's country and cultural expert providing the insight necessary to craft solutions to the post conflict turmoil.

End state discussions focus on the question, "what is the anticipated military, political and civil situation that we want to impose on the enemy's situation before we leave the battlefield?" This necessarily means that the end state considerations should be incorporated in the initial discussions concerning the political objective, or Objective Identification.

The definition of a political objective should incorporate a description of the end state. If Intelligence cannot find a description of the end state in the initial definition of the political objective, he advises the Statesman and the General that there is a strategy policy flaw that lends itself to policy failure and hostile exploitation.

By including a description of the end state in the definition of the political objective, the means necessary to achieve the end state should logically be incorporated into the means necessary to achieve the political objective. Intelligence looks to the

⁷⁵Kevin C.M. Benson and Christopher B. Thrash, "Declaring Victory: Planning Exit Strategies for Peace Operations," *Parameters* (Autumn 1996): 69-80.

definition of the political objective to determine whether an end state has been identified, and if it is not there, advises the General and the Statesman of the disconnects and prepares for a wide range of last minute end state related intelligence requirements.

The following generic end state questions provide a useful guide to Intelligence supporting war planners.

- a. What are the cultural and political barriers and facilitators for the creation of viable internal mechanisms for sustaining the basic necessities for life?
- b. What are the cultural and political internal distractors that impede the re-establishment of internal stability, domestic structures, and government authority by fledgling governments?
- c. What interests of the coalition members can be used as a basis for inducing coalition assistance for long-term maintenance and support programs?
- d. What cultural, economic and political inhibitors prevent commodity control from being vested in legitimate government authority?
- e. Is the economic culture and infrastructure conducive to the privatization (local contracting) of residual logistical requirements and emerging commodities trading necessary for local commerce and economic recovery?

Success Criteria

In Vietnam, there was neither a clearly identified objective nor a definition of victory. Kissinger alludes to this by saying that American policy planners should "understand the nature of the threat and the objectives that can be met followed by a clear

military strategy with a clear definition of success."⁷⁶ Strategic objectives are achieved by successfully pursuing operational objectives that attack strategic centers of gravity. While the precise nature of strategic objectives is known to exist in two forms (destroy the enemy or prescribe peace terms to him), the precise nature of operational objectives aimed at strategic centers of gravity may take on an infinite variety of forms based on the circumstances of the war. What Intelligence must be mindful of and be able to identify is whether there is a correlation between operational objectives, strategic centers of gravity, and the strategic objective. The criteria of success may lie with Intelligence's answers to the following question: Do the selection and attainment of the operational objectives attack and destabilize the strategic centers of gravity or otherwise achieve the strategic objective?

Actions Necessary to Achieve the Objective

This consideration asks the question, "What actions are necessary to achieve the objective?" Clifford points out that in Vietnam this question was never adequately addressed saying: "(T)he basic questions, ... 'What do we have to do to win?', ... 'What is achievable?' were never specifically answered."⁷⁷

McNamara offers a partial answer. Basic to the successful execution of any military operation is how and whether the fighting entity is organized and prepared to fight. Strategically, America was not ready. There was "a failure to organize the top

⁷⁶Kissinger, 700.

⁷⁷Clifford, 415-416, 485, *passim*.

echelons of the executive department to deal effectively with the extraordinary complex range of political and military issues associated with the application of military force under substantial constraints over long period of time.”⁷⁸ The strategic mechanism for identifying and addressing "the objective" was not in place. The question for the General, Statesman, and Intelligence becomes “is the government organized to deal ‘effectively with the extraordinary complex range of political and military issues associated with the application of military force’ for the duration of the conflict.” If the answer is less than an unequivocal “Yes,” Intelligence should anticipate fissures in the Political Trinity that may be exploited by the enemy.

Actions necessary to achieve the objective involve identifying the linkage between strategic centers of gravity and strategic and operational objectives. At the strategic level, identifying the actions necessary to achieve the objective include: organizing the government to fight, identifying the operational objectives that directly attack strategic centers of gravity and identifying the discrete steps necessary to achieve those operational objectives.

Analytical Considerations for Objective and End State Identification

The aforementioned considerations form the basis for objective and end state identification. They may be summarized as follows.

⁷⁸McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 321-323.

Objectives. What is the strategic objective? Does the objective solve the long-term, underlying problem?

Centers of Gravity. What are the centers of gravity that have to be attacked to achieve that objective? What are the operational objectives that best attack specific strategic centers of gravity? What are the discrete steps necessary to achieve the operational objectives? Do the selection and attainment of the operational objectives attack and destabilize the strategic centers of gravity or otherwise achieve the strategic objective? Is the government organized to identify and attack these centers of gravity? How will we know when the strategic center of gravity has been successfully destroyed?

End State. What is the desired end state? What are the incongruencies between the objectives and the end states and how are they resolved? Can the end state be achieved by the military? What are the cultural and political barriers and facilitators for the creation of viable internal mechanisms for sustaining the basic necessities for life? What are the cultural and political internal distractors that impede the re-establishment of internal stability, domestic structures, and government authority by fledgling governments? What interests of the coalition members can be used as a basis for inducing coalition assistance for long-term maintenance and support programs? What cultural, economic and political inhibitors prevent commodity control from being vested in legitimate government authority? Is the economic culture and infrastructure conducive to the privatization (local contracting) of residual logistical requirements and emerging commodities trading necessary for local commerce and economic recovery? Can the objective and end state be met with current doctrine and force structure? Are military

resources sufficient in quality and quantity to achieve the objective and end state? What is the scale of the means necessary to achieve the objective including the end state?

Success Criteria. What is the definition of success? Is there a positive correlation between operational objectives, enemy strategic centers of gravity and the strategic objective? Does the selection and attainment of the operational objectives attack and destabilize the strategic centers of gravity or otherwise achieve the strategic objective?

Actions Necessary to Achieve the Objective. What are the actions necessary to achieve the objective? Is the government organized to fight the war for the duration and throughout the spectrum necessary to achieve the objective? Has the government identified the political objective and prescribed actions necessary to achieve the objective?

Exit Strategy. What is the exit strategy? What are the recognizable conditions for knowing when to exit? Is there a transition process identified? What are the military and political conditions for withdrawal and disengagement and are they congruent?

The above section is necessarily long for it represents the preponderance of the problems the Statesman and the General will encounter once U.S. forces are engaged. Offering them early in the analytical process provides the policy maker a more detailed appreciation for the size and scope of the task they are about to undertake. An inability to answer one or more of these questions portends problems for future planning.

STRATEGIC APPRAISAL

The strategic appraisal is primarily an assessment of the existing internal U.S. condition where Intelligence, understanding the underlying problem, having an assessment of the interests at issue, and knowing the objective being pursued, assesses the demands on the national will and the national capacity. Nixon, McNamara, Clifford, and Kissinger observe that in Vietnam this step was never adequately performed.

Demands on the National Will

Public support is essential for protracted conflict. McNamara points out that on the American side of the Vietnam War, "there was a failure to incorporate the government and the people into a public discussion and commitment before initiating hostilities."⁷⁹ Nixon identifies a similar "failure to mobilize the American people."⁸⁰ Kissinger states the need to "provide for internal domestic cohesion."⁸¹

Policy makers embarking on a war and expecting public support require a program for explaining the nature of the problem at hand, how it affects meaningful U.S. interests, and the objectives being pursued. The absence of any of these elements sets the stage for misunderstanding, doubt, and opportunities for domestic and international disinformation. It may be characterized as an Information Warfare vulnerability. Intelligence is interested

⁷⁹Kissinger, 323.

⁸⁰Nixon, 47.

⁸¹Kissinger, 700.

in the clarity of communications between the government and the people and whether the government has clearly linked the underlying problems, affected interests and strategic objective in such a manner that it enjoys public support. The failure to do this is an indicator of flawed policy, flawed policy development, and potentially flawed policy execution.

Demands on the National Capacity

National Capacity is a nation's overall ability to mobilize, sustain and apply the three traditional levers of power: diplomacy, economy and military. It is the psychological will and physical muscle of state power. The stronger a state, the more the national capacity. However, as the American experience in Vietnam demonstrates, a weaker nation's adroit application of available levers can offset or defeat the misapplied levers of a stronger nation.

Diplomatic leverage addresses a state's management of its international relations. An index of the effectiveness of diplomatic leverage that a nation has over a specific international problem is the breadth and depth of international support. In Vietnam, the U.S. relied on arm twisting, an indicator of flawed policy or flawed policy execution. In conflicts such as World War II, where the interests at issue motivate belligerents to support the conflict with enthusiasm, diplomatic leverage is increased. Consequently, the more diplomatically committed a state is to an issue, the more forthcoming it is of its military and economic support. Diplomatically, the United States encountered problems with allied support in Vietnam. America's allies did not perceive the regional threat the

same way as did the United States and U.S. domestic discontent fueled, to some extent, the reluctance of allies to become more decisively engaged in Vietnam.⁸² They did not want to send troops.⁸³ To overcome allied reluctance, Johnson applied heavy-handed political pressure to encourage allied participation and underwrote much of their cost. The inability to gain the willingness and enthusiastic support of the allies to support the war was an American diplomatic weakness that was partially off-set by America's economic leverage. But the substitution of economic power for diplomatic shortcomings further diffused American economic strength. As a result, America did not receive broad-based, whole-hearted, support and had to shoulder more of the economic and military burden in Vietnam.

Economic leverage addresses the financial wealth that a state may use to resolve a problem. In classic political studies the contest between military and domestic spending is characterized as "guns versus butter" and postulates that a larger slice of the pie allocated to "guns" necessarily reduces the remaining size of the pie to "butter." The classic conundrum is guns *or* butter. Johnson chose both.

Johnson's decision sped the government headlong into a pattern of deficit spending, increased taxes and spiraling inflation that adversely affected the United States well into the 1990s. His decision to tap for the first time the surpluses of the Social Security Fund to pay for domestic political bills would have repercussions into the 21st Century.

⁸²Clifford, 450-452.

⁸³Clifford, 449.

The consumption of funds for both the war and the Great Society programs necessarily reduced the amount of funds available for international assistance that the U.S. could use to shore up sagging allied support. As a result, the Johnson administration began shouldering more of the military burden when limited financial incentives to allies failed. Economically, the U.S. was consuming domestic and international reserves that, when combined with other sources of policy frustration, fed a growing public disenchantment with the war effort. Essentially, the U.S. could not economically support its flawed policies.

Issues that Intelligence should consider include whether the economic health of a state can sustain a conflict. The Statesman's concern is whether the economic engine is large enough to fund a war over the time necessary to achieve the objective. Intelligence estimates the time to reduce the enemy's will or capability and provides the input necessary to determine if the economy is large enough to successfully fight the war, underwrite allied support, and sustain the public will.

Demands on the Military

Military leverage addresses the military power that a nation may bring to bear on an issue. The demands on the military capacity may be reflected in stresses observed in doctrine, funding, resources, and discipline. In Vietnam, there was no strategic doctrine linking and coordinating the prosecution of the war by the three services. This resulted in the evolution and conduct of three loosely connected but unsynchronized campaigns that

incurred unnecessary costs in men and material.⁸⁴ Contributing to this misapplication of military resources was the lack of a single person or agency responsible for the day-to-day prosecution of the war.

Because Johnson elected to pursue a guns and butter policy, the Vietnam War and "The Great Society" programs began to compete for funds with the political result that guns took backseat to butter. In response to these funding constraints, the military, and the Army in particular, began a program of equipment cannibalization from its world wide inventory to maintain combat effective levels in Vietnam setting the stage for the "Hollow Army" of the 1970s.

Although the draft was in full swing, public disenchantment and the failure of the government to mobilize its citizenry depressed military recruitment. As a result, the military sometimes turned a blind eye to the civilian judicial practice of sentencing felons to "three years in jail or three years in the army."⁸⁵ The deliberate infusion of society's criminal elements into the military, combined with the rising pressures of the Civil Rights and Peace movements (characterized by drugs, resistance, and confrontation) contributed to increasing military indiscipline characterized by drugs, assaults and murder.

All of these issues had measurable impacts on the military and the national will but never culminated in military mission failure. They do provide, however, measurable criteria for Intelligence in assessing how well the United States is internally prepared to

⁸⁴Hoopes, 61-62.

⁸⁵SSG Paul Page, U.S. Army Recruiting Command, Annapolis, Maryland, Recruiting Station, November, interview by author 17 November 1968.

conduct hostilities. If there are incongruencies in military doctrine, funding, resources and discipline, successful policy execution may be problematic.

Analytical Considerations for Strategic Appraisals

These assessments serve as the basic intelligence questions for conducting an internal strategic appraisal and they may be summarized as follows.

Demands on the National Will. What are the demands on the national will? Is there clarity of communication between the government and the people? Has the government clearly linked the underlying problems, affected interests and strategic objective in such a manner that it enjoys public support? Is there a strategy for adequately gaining and maintaining public support?

Demands on the National Capacity. What are the demands on the national capacity? Does the U.S. have the political leverage to obtain coalition support or is the U.S. confronted with a go-it-alone option? Is the political object worth going it alone? Are there sufficient resources for a go it alone option? Can the U.S. diplomatically afford to go-it-alone? Is the U.S. economic engine large enough to fight the war, underwrite allied support and sustain the public will?

Demands on the Military. What are the demands on the military? Is the military doctrine, funding, resources and discipline sufficient to achieve the military objective? Is there sufficient political guidance and resourcing to develop and pursue a meaningful military objective? Can the objective be met with current doctrine and force structure? Are military resources sufficient in quality and quantity to achieve the objective?

These questions help Intelligence identify where the nation is strong, where it is vulnerable and what strengths may be available to compensate for identified weaknesses.

NATIONAL POWER ASSESSMENT

National power consists of the tangible and intangible resources a nation uses to influence another nation or situation. National power is ultimately derived from sources of internal or external strength that a state can marshal and bring to bear in support of policy.

McNamara noted that the Americans were ignorant of the sources of North Vietnam's national power: regional history, culture, politics and leadership. As a result we misjudged the tenacity and resolve of a highly mobilized citizenry in the face of a seemingly overwhelming military.⁸⁶ Essentially, we misjudged relative national power. As a result, McNamara offers as a lesson learned that the U.S. should apply its national power within the context of multinational decision making.⁸⁷

Implicit in this observation are the requirements to conduct a national power assessment comparing the relative strengths of the belligerents and interested non-belligerents. This requires that an assessment be made of regional political alignments that impact on relative national power and determining what influence the U.S. can bring to bear in the region and on the target.

⁸⁶McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 321-323.

⁸⁷McNamara, *Argument Without End*, 392-396.

In effect, the U.S. has to generate sufficient national power to overcome an adversary, but how much is enough?

Clausewitz offers a formula. The policy maker needs to identify the scale of the means necessary to achieve the objective and, to do that, he must identify the scale of the opponents political demands and the opponent's situation and condition (including strength, will, character and abilities).⁸⁸ Elaborating, he says:

To determine how much of our resources must be mobilized for war, we must first examine our own political aim and that of the enemy. We must gauge the strength and situation of the opposing state. We must gauge the character and abilities of its government and people and do the same in regard to our own. Finally, we must evaluate the political sympathies of other states and the effect the war may have on them.⁸⁹

Essentially, Clausewitz is saying that we need to conduct a national power assessment. A national power assessment compares the immediate situation and internal condition of belligerents and interested non-belligerents.⁹⁰ McNamara, Clifford, Nixon and Kissinger tell us that we failed to conduct such an assessment in Vietnam and seriously misjudged the national power relationship between North Vietnam on one side and the United States and South Vietnam on the other. The American confidence rested on military might. The North Vietnamese, however, relied on other power sources and successfully applied them asymmetrically against South Vietnam and the United States. McNamara tells us that part of the miscalculation lay in the American misunderstanding of

⁸⁸Clausewitz, 585.

⁸⁹Clausewitz, 585-586.

⁹⁰Clausewitz, 590, 592.

the North Vietnamese mind set, nationalism, and geopolitical intentions as a result of a general ignorance of Vietnam's "regional history, culture, politics and leadership."⁹¹

Vietnam reinforces the importance of understanding relative national power which is comprised of two parts: the elements of national power and the levers of national power. In Vietnam, a weaker nation focused its elements of national power behind its military lever of power and defeated a stronger nation. The stronger nation relied on the strength of its military lever of power but failed to reinforce it with the elements of national power.

The elements of national power, Morgenthau tells us, are: geography, natural resources (food, raw materials), industrial capacity, military preparedness (technology and doctrine, leadership, quality and quantity of the armed forces), population (population distribution and trends), national character (and its influence on National Power), national morale (its instability, and quality of Society and Government as decisive factors), the quality of diplomacy (formation and execution of foreign policy), and the quality of government (developing, using and maintaining the full range of human potential and the popularity of its policies).⁹² With this information, Intelligence should assess how these elements combine to create power within belligerents and should be considered both for the present and how the elements evolve over time. In conducting such an assessment, Morgenthau cites three fallacies that Intelligence should avoid.

⁹¹McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 321-323.

⁹²Hans Morgenthau. *Politics Among Nations*. 6th rev. ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Publishers, 1985), 127-169.

Fallacy 1: Belief in the absolute character of power. There is no absolute character of power because power waxes and wanes. Power is relative and, in current terminology, can be off-set by asymmetrical attack. The lesson for Intelligence is to anticipate asymmetrical responses to perceptions of power.

Fallacy 2: Belief in the permanent character of power. All power relationships change and it is a fallacy to presume that once strong, a nation remains strong even if there are no visible signs of decay. It is the nature of aspiring or desperate powers to develop an element of power to offset currently reigning powers.

Fallacy 3: Belief in the Single Factor. There is no single factor of such importance that it overrides other considerations in assessing national power.⁹³

David Jablonsky, writing for *Parameters*, divides Morgenthau's elements of national power into two categories useful to Intelligence: natural and social determinants of power. The natural determinants of power include geography, natural resources and population. The social determinants of power include economics (industrial capacity), military, psychological (national character and national morale) and political (quality of diplomacy, quality of government and foreign policy).⁹⁴ Both Morgenthau and Jablonsky provide Intelligence a suitable point of departure in exploring the elements of national power.

⁹³Morgenthau, 174-183.

⁹⁴David Jablonsky, "National Power," *Parameters* (Spring 1997), URL: <<http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/97spring/jablonsk.htm>>, accessed 20 November 2000.

Based on the above, Intelligence should look at natural and sociological determinants of national power with a view toward identifying how they contribute to, or serve as a source of, tactical, operational and strategic strength.

Natural Determinants of Power

Geography. Geography provides a fundamental, and therefore strategic, basis for regional assessments and decision making. As Colin Gray states, geography "defines the players (which are, or would like to be, territorially organized states), frequently defines the stakes for which the players contend, and always defines the terms in which they measure security relative to others."⁹⁵

The analyst's strategic geographical appreciation for a regional target includes those geographical disciplines that affect national power and the levers of national power: strategic, political, economic, military, and cultural geography.⁹⁶ Because the thrust of this thesis addresses the analytical questions pertinent to diplomatic and, ultimately, military operations, it is appropriate to address military geography as a basis for the subsequent discussions of the remaining geographical disciplines.

Military Geography, a recently revived discipline, "concerns all physical, cultural and other environmental influences over military policies, plans, programs, and combat

⁹⁵Colin Gray, "The Continued Primacy of Geography," *Orbis*, Spring 1996, 248-249.

⁹⁶Mackubin Owens, "In Defense of Classical Geopolitics," *Naval War College Review*, Autumn, 1999, URL:<<http://www.nwc.navy.mil/press/Review/1999/autum/art3-a99.htm>>, accessed 3 May 2002.

support operations at all levels in global, regional, and local contexts."⁹⁷ Military geography prompts Intelligence to ask how a geographical discipline affects military and diplomatic options. Consider the following examples.

Strategic Geography addresses the physical make up of the planet. Location influences decision making and the application of power in a wide range of both obvious and subtle considerations. Intelligence, assessing a problem for its strategic implications, looks for geography's influence on three factors: strategic reach, centers of gravity, and lines of communication.

Strategic Reach addresses whether a nation can project its effective military power to an objective location, sustain it sufficiently so that it can achieve the political objective and return intact. Napoleon's and Hitler's march on Moscow exceeded their respective strategic reach.

Centers of Gravity assessments address whether or not geographical locations protect or make vulnerable strategic sources of strength from which an entity draws its power and will. Diplomatic centers of gravity are traditionally thought to be national capitols. Moscow, as discovered by Napoleon and Hitler, is insulated by vast expanses of land. Jerusalem, the new capitol of Israel, lies exposed on the eastern border. London, insulated by a channel, has been protected from an occupying force for nearly a thousand years. Economic centers of gravity may similarly be made vulnerable or insulated by geography. The Pars oil fields of Iran are concentrated in a single area lending itself to

⁹⁷John M. Collins. *Military Geography For Professionals and the Public* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press: 1998), 401.

wartime seizure. The economic center of gravity for China is her eastern seaboard and is sufficiently dispersed that successfully attacking that center of gravity is problematic.

Lines of Communication issues address whether or not the geographical feature is suitable for movement of commerce and military forces. The world is divided into water, land, and air and each provides a transportation conduit to other parts of the world. Navies and commerce travel over water, armies and commerce travel over land; air forces and commerce travel through the air. Military and economic leverage are inextricably entwined with physical geography. Movement in any of the three dimensions are subject to choke points and control over a choke point provides effective control over an opponent's lever of power.

Choke points are important to Intelligence because each one is either a flash point for conflict or a conduit through which the forces traveling to a conflict must travel. At sea, there are over "100 international straits used for navigation that are between six and 24 miles wide" that can be categorized as "strategic choke points."⁹⁸ Reynolds B. Peele, writing for *Parameters* and citing Department of Defense sources, identifies the eight strategic choke points as:

- a. the Gulf of Mexico-Caribbean Sea with the Panama Canal;
- b. the North Sea Baltic Sea with several channels and straits;
- c. the Mediterranean-Black Sea with the Strait of Gibraltar and access to the Middle Eastern areas;

⁹⁸David G. Hansen, "The Immutable Importance of Geography," *Parameters* (Spring 1997): 58.

- d. the western Indian Ocean with the Suez Canal, Bab el Mandeb, the Strait of Hormuz, and around South Africa to the Mozambique Channel;
- e. the Southeast Asian Seas with the Malacca and Lombok Straits among others, and sea lanes of communications (SLOCS) passing the Spratley Islands;
- f. the Northeast Asian Seas with SLOCS important for access to Japan, Korea, China and Russia;
- g. the Southwest Pacific with important SLOC access to Australia; and,
- h. the Arctic Ocean with the Bering Strait.⁹⁹

Political geography is critical in identifying the physical location of friendly and hostile governments and how their distribution around the globe affects both power projection and access to a regional target. The intent is to discern what political alignments exist, how they are likely to respond and how the political environment affects U.S. options. Belligerents rely on favorable distributions of political geography to facilitate their military reach or peripheral security. The absence of a favorable political geography requires either a modification in the political objective or an adaption of a compensating military capability. The lack of French permission to fly through their airspace during the Libyan punitive raid required an adaption of military capability: the execution of the longest air refuel assisted combat mission in history as aircraft flew around France, the length of the Mediterranean to Libya and back.

⁹⁹Reynolds B. Peele, "The Importance of Maritime Chokepoints," *Parameters* (Summer 1997): 61-74.

Economic geography identifies, among other things, the planetary distribution of strategic raw materials which form the basis of wealth (economic power) and undergird both diplomatic and military power. As an element of national power and a lever of national power, economics is a major motivation and tool for war. If trade (economics) and diplomacy fail to satisfactorily cross level economic wealth, the slighted nation may elect, if it can, to use military power to "re-distribute" the wealth. Strategic raw materials and the industries that transform them into commodities may constitute economic centers of gravity worthy of attack and defense. Economics will also be discussed as a social determinant of power.

Cultural geography also has strategic planning impacts and the manner in which "culture" is defined becomes a critical point of analytical departure. JCS Pub 1-02, which provides definitional points of departure for subsequent strategic inquiry, defines culture simply as "a feature of the terrain that has been constructed by man. Included are such items as roads, buildings, and canals; boundary lines; and in a broad sense, all names and legends on a map."¹⁰⁰

Collins, by contrast, in his publication *Military Geography For Professionals and the Public*, defines culture as: "an interdisciplinary field that deals with spatial variations in learned behavior, including the geographical diversity of settlements, languages, religions, social structures, the arts, economics, technologies and other activities."¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰JCS Joint Pub 1-02, under "culture."

¹⁰¹Collins, 395.

Intelligence's immediate concerns for culture's impact on military operations lies in four planning areas, referred to as "Beans, Bullets, Blankets and Bandages."

Beans: How does the regional culture affect the logistical system? Will the U.S. logistical presence induce or exacerbate any undesirable cultural practices and, if so, what are their effects?

Bullets: How does the regional culture affect U.S. war fighting doctrine? Are there any cultural considerations influencing the use or impact of U.S. weapons systems? Will the military targets and targeting practices have any adverse affects on allies, the public or other significant players? How does the application of U.S. fire power and war fighting doctrine permit the enemy to attack U.S. centers of gravity?

Blankets: Are there any cultural problems associated with the employment, billeting and social interaction of American troops? What are the impacts of refugees and displaced civilians? What cultural disconnects exist that might permit an enemy to attack U.S. centers of gravity?

Bandages: What cultural disconnects exist that might permit the enemy to attack U.S. centers of gravity through the medical system? Are there any cultural impacts on the means and procedures for providing medical support to U.S. forces, other belligerents, refugees or displaced persons?

Natural Resources. Strategic raw materials provide a basis for the wealth of nations and when combined with economic processes that can successfully develop, use and maintain the potential of the raw materials, wealth is enhanced. Raw materials that are not effectively exploited do not materially enhance the national power of a nation.

When a nation lacks a material and can not through trade or diplomacy cross level another country's excess materials to make up a shortage, the potential for conflict arises.

Over dependence on a single raw material as the basis for economic well being constitutes both a center of gravity and strategic vulnerability. Kuwaiti oil fields are an economic source of strength and may be defined as an economic center of gravity. Because the oil fields are geographically centralized in a small country they were, and still are, vulnerable to Iraqi attack. Intelligence should be able to identify whether a belligerent is overly dependent on a specific natural resource, what claims may be held by other nations, whether there is a potential for conflict and whether the resource is a center of gravity, a strategic vulnerability, or both.

Population. Population is traditionally regarded as an essential part of national power; the larger the population, the greater the potential of its military. However, this is not necessarily the sole criterion. Population becomes significant when it can be readily transformed into either military or economic power in answer to immediate national needs. The nature of the population should be evaluated from the stand point of how it can affect military and diplomatic pursuit of the objective. A vast population with no means for mobilization is ineffective for national defense. A sizable, well-armed, and highly motivated population, such as found by U.S. Rangers in Mogadishu, Somalia, can be problematic. On the other hand, a sizable, well-armed but unmotivated population can be a strategic vulnerability as the United States discovered in Vietnam. Analysts are primarily concerned with the size, militancy, and mobilization potential of a population both in a regular service and militia capacity.

Social Determinants of National Power

Economics. This element of national power is the basis for a nation's economic lever of power. Curiously, it is both under-addressed and not fully integrated in intelligence studies for its inherent strengths and weaknesses as a tool supplementing or replacing military power in support of policy. Economic issues affecting the target country include identifying the economic conditions motivating a nation to war, how the war will stress the economy, what economic centers of gravity the country will rely on to sustain the war effort, and what economic vulnerabilities will expose themselves before, during and after the conflict.

Economics affects military planning. Oil shortages motivated Japan to attack Pearl Harbor. The economic impact of national mobilization forces an Israeli preference for preemptive strikes, followed by a high intensity, short duration campaign based on high technology so that her workforce may be rapidly demobilized and returned to industry and commerce.

Intelligence will find Michael Brown's primer on the strategic uses of economic power useful for understanding how economics influences conflict. Essentially Brown identifies three principles and five applications of economic power. The principles are that economic strategies need adequate resources, sufficient time, and must be integrated with other policies to be effective. Brown further sees that economic policies can be used to

enhance regional stability, used as leverage, increase the capabilities of allies, reduce the capabilities of adversaries, and signaling.¹⁰²

Military. A military capabilities analysis is the most common and most fundamental comparison of the relative strengths of the belligerents. It was also the critical miscalculation in the Vietnam War.

Jordan, Taylor and Korb and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) offer two similar frameworks useful to Intelligence. Both address force size/structure, weapons systems, mobility, logistics, doctrine, training, military leadership, morale, industrial base supporting the military, technological capabilities, intelligence, popular will, national leadership, and alliances.

DIA's capabilities analysis model is extensively detailed and includes operational and tactical detail. Jordan, Taylor and Korb's model, on the other hand, retains its strategic perspective and is of more immediate utility for strategic appraisals. Jordan, Taylor and Korb's model are summarized in Appendix C.¹⁰³ There are two additional considerations not clearly addressed by either the DIA model or Jordan. They are the following:

¹⁰²Michael L. Brown, "The Economic Dimensions of Strategy," *Parameters* (Summer 1986): 36-44.

¹⁰³Amos A. Jordan, William J. Taylor, Jr., and Lawrence Korb, *American National Security Policy and Process*, 4th rev. ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993): 27-28.

a. Intelligence compiling biographies of military and political leaders should outline their writings and thoughts on present and future strategy and doctrine. This reveals how the enemy may choose to fight.

b. Intelligence should be sensitive to up and coming political and military stars whose personal views clash with established doctrine and who need only the intersection of opportunity and preparation to establish themselves as the new Guderians, Pattons, and Stuarts. They constitute doctrinal surprise. Jordan and DIA become a point of departure, then, for assessing belligerent's military capabilities.

Sam Adams' experience within the CIA illustrates that both the DIA model and the model proposed by Jordan and others, hinges on integrity of reporting. During Vietnam the Johnson Administration applied pressure on the military, specifically the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, to misrepresent actual enemy strength for political purposes. This had the practical effect of making the North Vietnamese looking weaker than they actually were.¹⁰⁴

History demonstrates that inferior forces have frequently defeated superior opponents' suggesting that a straight forward military capabilities analysis may be insufficient for a strategic comparison. Intelligence may need to look beyond a simple military capabilities analysis and explore the supporting relationships the military enjoys from the government and the people.

¹⁰⁴Sam Adams, *War of Numbers: An Intelligence Memoir* (South Royalton, Steerford Press, 1994): 220.

Clausewitz describes the relationship between the government, the people and the military as critical for the successful prosecution of a war.¹⁰⁵ Vietnam demonstrated that without public support, the United States government cannot successfully prosecute a protracted war. The Soviet systems of the Cold War era, of which North Vietnam was a part, possessed a natural supporting relationship between the government and the military. The tenuous segment was “the People” who were kept in line by state coercion, propaganda, or, in the case of North Vietnam following the Second World War, a sense of nationalism. The mutually supporting bond among the three elements must be maintained to a reasonable degree if a belligerent is to be successful.

Once the basic military capabilities assessment is completed, Intelligence examines the mutually supporting relationships the military enjoys with both the government and the people. This examination looks at the bonds, or seams, between the military and the people, and the military and the government, and finally, the seams between the people and the government. The examination focuses on contradictions in the strategic culture or synergistic symbiosis that may exist between the military and the other two elements. The intent is to identify exploitable contradictions that the U.S. may pursue against its adversaries while defending its own.

For example, the war in Vietnam exacerbated a contradiction in America’s strategic culture: the dichotomy between an anti-military bias and a tradition of the citizen soldier. The North Vietnamese enjoyed the benefits of splitting a seam between the American military and the American people.

¹⁰⁵Clausewitz, 89.

On the other hand, the strategic culture of World War II Germany incorporated a discipline and devotion to the state that, when exhibited by the people and the military, created an almost intractable bond to the government. The seams between the government and the military, and the government and the people were impervious to assault. The military, as an expression of the state, enjoyed a similar bond with the people and the government. These mutually supporting relationships presented attackers little room to split the seams in the Political Trinity in World War II Germany. The result was that Germany fought to her destruction in 1945.

Psychological. Jablonsky observes that “the psychological element of power consists of national will and morale, national character and the degree of national integration”¹⁰⁶ He further defines national will and moral “as the degree of determination that any actor manifests in the pursuit of it’s internal or external objectives.”¹⁰⁷ For the purposes of this thesis, the terms “national will” and “morale” will be consolidated into “national will.”

There are actually three national wills of interest to Intelligence. Using the Political Trinity, there is the national will of the government (or Statesman), the national will of the military (the General) and national will of the people. Each one is separate from the other but combine into a whole. Steadfastness on the part of all three entities portends problems for an opponent. A weakness on the part of any one may offer an exploitable vulnerability. For example, the national will of Adolph Hitler was matched by

¹⁰⁶Jablonsky, “National Power.”

¹⁰⁷Jablonsky, “National Power.”

that of the German Army and the German citizenry presenting the Allies with an unbowed enemy. The combined national will of the Japanese Army, citizenry and head of government (the emperor) promised the same tenacious homeland defense but ultimately, the will of the emperor broke forcing the surrender of the Army. The will of the American soldier was not matched by that of the American people during Vietnam. The World War I national will of the Russian military was less than the national will of its political leadership.

Strategic national character is not necessarily hard to quantify. For example, DeTocqueville captured the essence of American and Russian character and is worth quoting at length. In 1834, he wrote:

There are at the present two great nations in the world which started from different points, but seem to tend towards the same end. I allude to the Russians and the Americans. Both of them have grown up unnoticed; and while the attention of mankind was directed elsewhere, they have suddenly placed themselves in the front rank among the nations, and the world has learned of their existence and their greatness at almost the same time.

All other nations seem to have nearly reached their natural limits, and they have only to maintain their power; but these are still in the act of growth. All the others have stopped, or continue to advance with extreme difficulty; these alone are proceeding to advance with ease and celerity along a path to which no limit can be perceived. The American struggles against the obstacles which nature opposes to him; the adversaries of the Russian are men. The former combats the wilderness and savage life; the latter, civilization with all its arms. The conquests of the American are therefore gained by the ploughshare; those of the Russian by the sword. The Anglo-American relies upon the personal interests to accomplish his ends, and gives free scope to the unguided strength and common sense of the people; the Russian centers all the authority of society in a single arm. The principle instrument of the former is freedom; of the latter, servitude. Their starting-point is different, and their courses are not the same; yet

each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe.¹⁰⁸

A careful re-reading of the above passage also indicates that assessments of national character may also be time or era specific. Assessing national character focuses on those traits that facilitate or detract from a war effort and Intelligence should review the characterizations ascribed to the belligerent by past enemies and note those traits that are militarily significant and within the context of the present time.

National integration, according to Jablonsky, "refers ... to the sense of belonging and identification of a nation's people."¹⁰⁹ Normally, in state on state conflict, citizens tend to rally around their individual flag. However, integration issues can surface when one state relies on some form of coerced compliance. For example, World War II Germany's reliance on forced labor in the ammunition plants routinely produced sabotaged munitions.

Other states may run into problems, such as secessionist movements, when uncontrolled integration shifts the cultural balance such as in Mexico when she permitted uncontrolled immigration into what is now Texas. The cultural and ethnic homogeneity of Japan, on the other hand, served the nation well in maintaining her resolve during World War II. Iraq, Turkey, and Iran have a national integration problem in the form of Kurdistan. Canada has Quebec. The issue for Intelligence is to determine how national integration problems can influence the situation of each belligerent.

¹⁰⁸Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Mentor Books, 1984), 142.

¹⁰⁹Jablonsky, "National Power."

Political Leadership. The political element of power shapes how the belligerent will view and act upon a given problem. It is a function of the quality of leadership exerted over diplomacy, government and foreign policy. The focus of the assessment is the political leadership and how effectively it discharges its responsibilities.

Jablonsky suggests that such an inquiry should address how the leadership makes use of the current form of government, the attitude of the population toward the government, how strong the people want to be and how strong and efficient the governmental leadership is.¹¹⁰

Jablonsky continues by observing the well-recognized formulas that authoritarian systems may initially respond more rapidly and forcefully compared to democratic systems, but democratic systems tend to harness the full range of human potential and endure longer. Each system has its advantages and disadvantages, but what Intelligence should be looking for is how the individual belligerent responds to conflict. A good reference is his mobilization procedures, internal actions the political element uses to reinforce its continuity with the people and the military, and how the political element uses its economic lever for signaling.

Political mindsets are a key area of inquiry. McNamara records that American planners failed to assess the enemy mindset in Vietnam resulting in a serious misjudgment of the enemy's determination and intentions.¹¹¹ Intelligence explores mindsets to

¹¹⁰Jablonsky, "National Power."

¹¹¹McNamara, *Argument Without End*, 392-396.

appreciate how belligerents may view an issue and what their likely response will be given available elements and levers of national power.

Caldwell provides such a methodology while exploring five major leadership topics: who is in charge, what is he up to, understanding the system, effects of internal challenges, and potential for change by the existing leadership.¹¹² There are, however, additional considerations beyond those that Caldwell presents.

The question, "Who are the key decision makers?" is not necessarily answered with a straight forward list of office holders. Senior decision makers frequently hold multiple positions simultaneously and therefore maintain multiple, and sometimes competing, loyalties. As Crowder observes, the three fold impact of the presidency manifests itself in his capacity as the head of his political party, head of the executive branch, and the commander in chief of the armed forces.¹¹³ In the case of the United States during Vietnam, President Johnson's pursuit of his domestic political and social agenda materially and adversely affected the war effort. Decision makers' perspectives and decisions are influenced by the role the individual plays in government. Either they have an impact on the government or the government has an impact on them.

There are examples where power normally thought to belong to the decision maker may actually lie elsewhere. The Shah of Iran was the head of government, but the revolution demonstrated that the power actually lay with the Clerics. King George was

¹¹²George Caldwell, *Political Analysis for Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency), 1992.

¹¹³Ed Crowder, "Pointblank: A Study in Strategic and National Security Decision Making," *Airpower Journal* (Spring 1992): 62-63.

the titular head of England, but it was Churchill who made the day to day decisions fending off the Germans. Hirohito, the Emperor of Japan, acquiesced to the Army headed by Tojo.

Intelligence, looking at a line and block chart of a target government, should identify three relationships: legal or constitutional lines of authority, personal lines of influence, and legal or constitutional lines of influence. Mapping lines of influence providing the back channel communications heavily influencing policy and actions helps clarify the inner workings of an opposing government.

Once the key decision makers are identified, it is worthwhile to identify what shapes their thinking. One answer is history (including personal history or personal experience), culture (including religion), and politics.

History: There are at least four histories influencing decision makers that are of interest to Intelligence. The first is national and international history as the government wants the people to know it. Japan's re-interpretation of its World War II atrocities in China and Korea to evade responsibility is one example. Another, more remarkable example, is the multiple editions of the official state history of the Soviet Union which was frequently revised to reflect current political correctness. Intelligence should determine if there is an official approval process for releasing formal histories, obtain copies of the pertinent publications, and where possible identify hidden agendas, patterns of omission, amplification and de-emphasis as it relates to the target. Strategic issues for this first version of history includes: historical, present and emerging national security interests; official representations of patterns of aggression and defense; patterns of mobilization and

demobilization; how the elements of national power are employed in peace and war; techniques in applying diplomatic, economic and military levers in pursuit of national interests; identification and protection of strategic diplomatic, economic and military centers of gravity; identification and methods of protecting critical vulnerabilities; interaction of the Political Trinity (the people, the government and the military) during peace and war.

The second is the history characterized by lore and legend which from the beginnings of one's childhood implants a perspective that influences adult decision making: "If this isn't the way it was, this is the way it should have been." For example, among some Americans, Manifest Destiny didn't necessarily die with the Old West. The Japanese were heavily influenced by the Bushido tradition and the ancient salvation provided by "the Divine Wind." Issues that warrant Intelligence's attention include: understanding the national history not as the elites know it, but as the children know it, identifying major historical themes and events that may have a romantic or heroic application to the current situation, and understanding how those themes may be offensively or defensively applied.

The third history is organizational, party or religious history that provides a subnational influence on the personal perspective of a decision maker. Ford Motor Company's quantitative analysis process as practiced by McNamara heavily influenced Pentagon decision making; the early experiences of Germany's National Socialist Party helped shape a committed cadre in pursuit of a Nordic vision, and patterns of violence and betrayal in early Muslim religious history tend to provide a model for action by the more militant of the sect followers. Issues warranting analytical consideration include:

identifying organizational, party, and/or religious interests of the individual; determining the longevity of participation or degree of commitment to the entity and the degree to which it influences the decision maker's thinking; identifying the entity's values and themes and assessing what values they impart to the decision maker, or, conversely, whether the decision maker embraced the entity as an outlet for his values.

The fourth history is a factual history of personal experience. In this category resides personal experience which has the greatest impact on the decision maker. Personal experience, and the experiences of the decision maker's parents are significant and help shape the decision maker's perspective on familiar or recurring issues. Factors influencing a parents' perspective may affect a child even though the child did not live during the event. Survivors of Hiroshima, and their descendants, have markedly different perspectives on nuclear weapons than do survivors, and their descendants, of Pearl Harbor. One analytical technique for identifying and understanding the impact of history on an individual is to prepare a time line starting with the birth of the decision maker's parents extending to the present day. On that time line, identify world, regional and local events and assess them for impacts and lessons learned imparted either directly or indirectly to the decision maker.

Strategic Culture: Strategic culture heavily influences how a state, its decision makers and its people exercise, or endures the exercise of, national power.¹¹⁴ Snow describes strategic culture as "the unique blend of historical and physical experiences that

¹¹⁴John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 18.

conditions how different states, including the United States, view the role of military affairs" and suggests that America's strategic culture can be characterized as follows: a self perception as a pacifistic nation which is at variance with its history; a sense of isolation and special worth as a result of its geography; a cultural heritage defining man's relationship to the state; an American military tradition; an anti military bias; a tradition of the citizen soldier; a self perception of invincibility; a pattern of military and social mobilization in emergencies; democratic institutions; a preference for total war; and, the necessity of the media.¹¹⁵

Atkins warns that "including culture in strategic assessments has a poor legacy...(borne) of ignorance, wishful thinking and mythology."¹¹⁶ Belbutowski, on the other hand, notes that understanding culture helps answer important military and civil questions such as the will of the enemy to fight, the determination of resistance groups to persevere, and the willingness of the populace to support insurgents or warlords."¹¹⁷ Regardless of the arguments either for or against incorporating culture into strategic assessments, North Vietnam assessed America's strategic culture, found a weakness and successfully exploited it. Future analysts should look for contradictions within each

¹¹⁵Donald M. Snow, *National Security: Enduring Problems of U.S. Defense Policy* (New York: St. Martins' Press, 1987): 26-41.

¹¹⁶Norvell Atkins, "Why Arabs Lose War," *Middle East Quarterly* (December 1999): 17.

¹¹⁷Paul M. Belbutowski, "Strategic Implication of Cultures in Conflict," *Parameters* (Spring 1996): 32-42.

belligerent's strategic cultures and recommend them for exploitation or protection as the situation dictates.

Religion: Religion influences a decision maker when the religion incorporates and projects rules of government, doctrines of warfare, applications of violence normally reserved for the state, or serves a decision maker's agenda. If the decision maker is religiously ardent and the religious doctrines incorporate roles and functions of statecraft, there is a greater likelihood that a decision maker will invoke religious tenants as a means and justification for action. This is particularly true for theocracies whose state agendas may be rooted in their respective Holy Texts. Even in secular states, ardently religious leaders may be predictably manipulated as the KGB demonstrated when they played upon President Carter's religious beliefs to suspend research and production of the neutron bomb.

For some nations, and some individual decision makers, religion may be a tool of statecraft. Ayatollah Khomeini used cassette tapes to carry his revolutionary message throughout Iran's 80,000 mosques effectively toppling the Shah. The same theological lines of communication sustain anti-American fervor today throughout the Middle East and could be exceedingly useful in mobilizing a people to war on the one hand and a problematic enemy center of gravity for the Americans on the other.

Intelligence should explore what the decision maker's relationship is to a religion, assess its militancy or its capacity to encourage a people to suffer or persevere, and determine if the decision maker exploits, operates independently of, or subordinates his decisions to, its religious dictates. Intelligence further assesses whether any of the levers

of power, the decision makers behind the levers, or any aspect of the Political Trinity can be influenced by the manipulation of any religious tenants.

Mindsets: McNamara suggests that, as a lesson learned, Americans should understand the mindset of their adversaries.¹¹⁸ Doing so is not a difficult process. Decision makers rise to power advocating political platforms which generally reflect their views or are derived from their views. National political agendas are contained in the political platforms of the contending parties and a review of the writings and policy pronouncements of successful political candidates and other office holders frequently telegraph the decision maker's mindset. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is one such example. Ho Chi Minh's nationalist writings are another. Friday prayers throughout the Muslim world are frequently rich in political content illuminating various agendas within specific countries and sects. Understanding the political platforms of the national parties and the personal writings of rising political stars is a basic, but frequently overlooked, analytical consideration.

Another political consideration is the influence exerted by the structures of the government bureaucracies which may retard, magnify or provide synergism to a leader's vision. Presumably, the U.S. government structure with its system of checks and balances induces friction to capably restrain an activist Presidency. However, the manner in which Lyndon Johnson wielded personal and political power combined with the abrogation of responsibility by the Congress permitted a long-term misapplication of power. An

¹¹⁸McNamara, *Argument Without End*, 392-396.

assessment of a bureaucratic structure should examine both the ideal and the potentially corrupted forms where expected checks and balances do not work.

Conversely, a system of government concentrating power and authority within a single leader facilitates individual maximization of personal power. Intelligence should examine how the government structure influences policy development, whether it is functioning as it should, and whether the decision makers are acting either in spite of the checks and balances or enjoying their support.

Centers of Gravity. Once Intelligence has assessed the natural and social determinants of power and the political leadership that employs that power, a further inquire should be made to determine each belligerents players' center of gravity. Intelligence looks for the moral, historical, cultural, psychological, religious, and ideological forces that influence each belligerents actions and recommends identifiable centers for attack. If a center of gravity is not susceptible to direct attack, Intelligence identifies susceptible centers of gravity that may be vulnerable to indirect U.S. attack. For example, if a direct attack on Iran's oil fields or China's eastern seaboard is not viable, a blockade or embargo may offer an indirect attack option. Intelligence should be able to identify for the Statesman and the General what the specific centers of gravity are for each belligerent, recommend an attack process that will induce the desired effect within a prescribed time. While Intelligence is assessing the enemy, it should also be assessing the enemy's perceptions of U.S. centers of gravity, anticipate the enemy's attack methodology and recommend protective measures.

In sum, national power assessments are appraisals of the elements and levers of national power, the quality of political leadership responsible for applying that power, their attending centers of gravity and how the correlation of power might be influenced to U.S. advantage. Based on these considerations, the following questions help Intelligence conduct a national power assessment.

Analytical Considerations for National Power Assessments

National Power. Conduct a National Power assessment comparing the relative natural and social determinants of power of interested belligerents and non-belligerents. Regionally, what political alignments exist and how does the political environment affect United States options? What influence can the United States bring to bear in the area? What are the dominant powers in the region and how are they likely to respond? How does the geography of the area affect United States interests and the application of United States power?

Political Leadership. Assess each belligerents' political trinity and the respective national will of each element within the trinity. What are the comparative strengths and weaknesses of each belligerents political trinity? Who are the key decision makers in each country and what has shaped their thinking? What is their likely perspective on this issue? How will this perspective be influenced by the role this individual plays in his government? How will the decision maker's perspective influence subsequent government actions? How does the governmental structure affect policy making and the decision makers and how can that structure be influenced? What societal influences exist and how will they

affect the decision maker? What relationships exist between the decision makers' nation-state and the other international actors? How stable are the governments? Do relevant actors/belligerents have the power to influence the outcome and will they use that power to influence the outcome?

Centers of Gravity. Assess the players' center of gravity. What moral, historical, cultural, psychological, religious, and ideological forces are in play and to what extent do they influence other aspects of the problem? Is it within the power of the U.S. to substantially modify these forces to accommodate U.S. aims? How are they modified? State what the center of gravity is for each player. How will you attack your opponent's center of gravity? How will you defend your own?

The national power assessment is closely related to the previously discussed strategic assessment. The earlier, separate, treatment of the internal strategic appraisal causes Intelligence to critically assess one's own condition to avoid the hubris exhibited in Vietnam. The strategic appraisal sets the base line for comparing the U.S. situation to the other belligerents. In both the strategic appraisal and the national power assessment, the same standards for comparing strengths and weaknesses should be used. Additionally, some analysts may choose to combine the strategic appraisal and the national power assessment into one step. They are presented separately in this thesis only for purposes of clarity.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Strategy is "the art and science of developing and using the political, economic and psychological powers of a nation, together with its armed forces, during peace and war, to secure national objectives."¹¹⁹ It is primarily the domain of the Statesman and the General and the neglect of this process constituted another American failure in Vietnam.

Kissinger states that the Americans failed to:

- a. conduct a policy review to determine if "the military and political objectives on behalf of which America had already invested so much were attainable, by what means and over what period of time, indeed, of whether the premises which had generated these commitments were even correct;"¹²⁰
- b. assess the costs and potential outcomes of the war; and,¹²¹
- c. comprehend the nature of the threat, develop political and military objectives or a military strategy with clear definitions of success.¹²²

Clifford states that American strategy developers never answered the questions, "Can the war be won?," "What do we have to do to win?," "What is our purpose?," and "What is achievable?"¹²³ Compounding this oversight was that "no connection between

¹¹⁹JCS, Joint Pub 102, under "strategy."

¹²⁰Kissinger, 657.

¹²¹Kissinger, 659.

¹²²Kissinger, 700.

¹²³Clifford, 415-416, 485, passim.

bombing the North and sending in American ground troops was recognized and discussed before the bombing began."¹²⁴ Once ground troops were committed, according to Nixon, American strategists failed to adapt a military strategy to "the political circumstances of the war" and failed to counter North Vietnam's military strategy of exploiting Laos and Cambodia.¹²⁵

Sound strategy incorporates an identification and understanding of a problem, an assessment of the interests at issue, identification of the political objective that protects the interests at issue and, if possible, resolves the problem. Intelligence supports decision makers by providing the enemy's perspective on an issue, how he may react, and what centers of gravity and exploitable vulnerabilities exist for targeting. Intelligence also anticipates enemy counter moves aimed at friendly centers of gravity and exploitable vulnerabilities. This was not done in Vietnam.

Crowder notes that there are at least two kinds of strategy: panacea strategies and strategies of doctrine.

Panacea strategies are public relations gimmicks designed to have a low profile, be popular with the public, and produce a quick victory with minimum costs. Panacea strategies will pursue their own agenda regardless of the quality of analytical support.¹²⁶

Strategies of doctrine are focused on the underlying problem and use existing doctrine to protect the designated interest. Strategies of doctrine, if they are to be successful, are

¹²⁴Clifford, 406.

¹²⁵Nixon, 47.

¹²⁶Crowder, 64.

heavily dependent on the accurate identification of centers of gravity, exploitable vulnerabilities and the seams in the Political Trinity. Intelligence insures this information is provided to the planners.

The decision maker chooses among the traditional levers of national power (diplomatic, economic, military) or the non-traditional levers (culture, technology, information). Intelligence identifies for the strategist which one is most credible and what near, intermediate and long-term effects each lever will have on the target. The decision maker tells Intelligence how quickly the behavior of the belligerent must be affected and Intelligence identifies the vulnerabilities that lend themselves to immediate exploitation. Intelligence tells the decision maker the capacity of the enemy's will so that a determination can be made if the application of a given lever can be sustained beyond the will of the target. In Vietnam, pin-prick bombings punctuated by protracted bombing halts were not an effective application of military power against a dedicated enemy.

The application of a lever, or combination of levers, must be credible. Intelligence should tell the decision maker how the enemy perceives the credibility of the proposed action. To do this, Intelligence looks at how the enemy interprets America's past record of performance in similar situations, how the enemy is receiving and interpreting diplomatic, economic and military signals communicating American intentions and resolve, and how the enemy is interpreting international opinion. We should be clearly

communicating, in terms the enemy understands, that we will act and will inflict greater harm than he can gain by pursuing his agenda.¹²⁷ This is an important consideration.

In the years following America's withdrawal from Vietnam, the international community perceived, as President Carter called it, a "great American malaise" adversely affecting the American will. Indeed, within the United States, the feasibility of subsequent military operations in Grenada and Panama, as well as the prelude to Desert Shield and Desert Storm, were questioned in the media and the international community. There was domestic and international doubt whether the United States had regained her will or capabilities to fight for her values. Even in the 21st Century, there are lingering doubts whether the Political Trinity of the United States has the wherewithal to conduct a fight characterized by parity rather than overwhelming strategic superiority. As a result, Intelligence should assess whether the enemy is receiving and understanding our diplomatic, economic and military signals that clearly communicate, in terms the enemy unmistakably understands, that we will act and will inflict greater harm than he can by defying our will. If that message is not being received and understood, Intelligence advises the Statesman and General to anticipate additional policy problems.

Intelligence's contribution to strategy development is to identify for a specific target what mix of leverage would be most effective, how the application of U.S. power can be most effectively phased and articulate a rough methodology for attacking the enemy centers of gravity, vulnerabilities and seams.

¹²⁷William W. Kaufmann, *Military Policy and National Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956): 19.

Military Strategy Issues

Long before hostilities begin, Intelligence examines U.S. posture from the enemy's perspective. One technique is to look for congruency in three documents: The National Security Strategy of the United States, the National Military Strategy, and the appropriate Theater Strategy. This can be done by checking the strategy to task sequence: Is the National Security Strategy supporting, and supported by, the National Military Strategy? Is the National Military Strategy supporting, and supported by, the Theater strategy? Remembering that operational operations are aimed at strategic centers of gravity, Intelligence looks at the U.S. theater strategy for vulnerabilities that would permit the enemy to strike at U.S. strategic centers of gravity. This was not done in Vietnam.

Once the decision is made to intervene, the Statesman should develop clear, attainable and measurable military objectives whose attainment will satisfy pertinent policy objectives and Intelligence should speak up if it is not readily apparent that this has been done. Echoing Clausewitz, Kissinger notes the need to "carefully identify the political goals and the necessary military strategy prior to going to war."¹²⁸ Intelligence reviews the sufficiency of planning and focus for attacks against enemy strategic centers of gravity by monitoring the linkage and logic of U.S. operational objectives: are the objectives, in fact, aimed at enemy strategic centers of gravity? No one was asking this question in Vietnam, and as a result the decentralized execution of the air, land and naval operations were never focused against any identified North Vietnamese centers of gravity.

¹²⁸Kissinger, 700.

Once the military capabilities analysis has been completed, the General and the Statesman collaborate on a strategic concept: a military course of action derived from an estimate of the strategic situation and military capability analysis.¹²⁹

Strategy, according to Lykke, is rarely "clearly expressed and infrequently described in sufficient detail for all to understand."¹³⁰ In describing a methodology for assessing a strategy, Lykke suggests the following: understand that military strategy is derived from a pre-existing political strategy; translate economic and political objectives into military objectives; and assign missions to military forces that are within their capabilities.¹³¹ He concludes with the now classic and enduring equation: military strategy equals military objectives plus strategic concepts plus military resources.¹³² Intelligence constantly monitors these elements to identify vulnerabilities that may be exploited by the enemy.

Intelligence then evaluates the strategy developed by the Statesman and the General for suitability, feasibility and acceptability, as prescribed by Dunn and Staudenmeier.¹³³ The suitability of a military strategy is measured by how well it achieves

¹²⁹Arthur F. Lykke. "Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy." *Military Strategy: Theory and Application*, 1984-1985, (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, May 1984), URL: <<http://www.amsc.belvoir.army.mil/ecampus/gpc/prework/strategy/understand.htm>>, accessed 8 May 2002.

¹³⁰Lykke, "Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy."

¹³¹Lykke, "Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy."

¹³²Lykke, "Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy."

¹³³Dunn, Keith A., and William O. Staudenmeier. "Strategy for Survival," *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1983): 22-41.

a desired political effect and the strategy must have a reasonable chance of success at an acceptable political and military cost. Intelligence should provide the enemy's perspective, as was not done in Vietnam, so that the Statesman and General may critique their strategy.

Suitability: In Dunn and Staudenmeier's view, an indices of a suitable military objective is that it leads to an intended political effect. Intelligence, taking the enemy's point of view, advises strategists whether or not the proposed strategy will effectively attack an enemy's center of gravity or critical vulnerability or split a seam in the Political Trinity.

Feasibility: Feasibility means that the strategy "has a reasonable chance of success."¹³⁴ Dunn and Staudenmeier observe that "political feasibility of any coalition approach will require the coalition approach to place a high premium on strong and effective American leadership, as well as on consistency, predictability, and sensitivity toward the political, economic, military and social problems of its allies," and that America does not do this well. This suggests that Intelligence should be prepared to advise strategists of the efficacy of their strategy from the stand point of both the enemy and potentially wavering allies. In the case of wavering allies, Intelligence should be prepared to identify the sources of allied concern and provide recommendations for resolving them.

Acceptability: The acceptability of a strategic concept is measured by whether it "achieves its military objective at a reasonable cost."¹³⁵ At a minimum, Intelligence assesses the strategy from the enemy's perspective for the enemy's capability and means

¹³⁴Dunn, 31.

¹³⁵Dunn, 34.

by which the enemy can inflict unanticipated costs upon the United States. What costs can the enemy impose on America's diplomatic, military and economic levers of power?

These factors, suitability, feasibility, and acceptability, by themselves may be inadequate. Downey and Metz note that "the strategist must be alert to social conditions which cause shifts in values.... A strategist who creates a product solely according to the criteria of suitability, feasibility and acceptable military cost has done the most important three-fourths of his job, that missing fourth - failure to package the strategy into a politically palatable fashion - may make the other three-fourths irrelevant."¹³⁶ For Intelligence, this means the strategy should be continuously evaluated from the enemy's perspective to deny the enemy exploitable opportunities.

There is one other dimension that, while not necessary, is highly desirable: an air of legitimacy. McNamara observes that American actions abroad should project fundamental American values.¹³⁷ Actions that do not project fundamental American values, such as Kennedy's involvement in the assassination of Diem, the Americal Division's actions at Mei Lai, as well as the celebrated photographs of the Marine lighting fire to the roof of a Vietnamese grass hut, serve the propaganda and information warfare interests of belligerents hostile to the United States. These actions adversely impact coalition and domestic support while reinforcing the enemy's resolve. Intelligence constantly monitors international opinion for how it may undermine allied support.

¹³⁶Frederick M. Downey and Steven Metz. "The American Political Culture and Strategic Planning." *Parameters* (September 1988): 42.

¹³⁷McNamara, *Argument without End*, 392-396.

From the standpoint of the General and the Statesman, military intervention may be acceptable if the presence of U.S. forces is regarded as legitimate and the strategy is suitable, survivable, credible, clear, and safe. U.S. forces must survive the conflict and the aggressor must believe that we have the capability and the political will to execute the mission. The deterrent action must clearly define the limits of permissible conduct and communicate United States resolve to support friendly nations in the region and safeguard all our other vital interests. Intelligence evaluates whether the intended perception is clearly received and successfully implanted in the mind of the adversary.

The General and the Statesman ensure that the strategy reduces the risk of conflict through accident, unauthorized use of force, or miscalculation and must anticipate enemy actions designed to attack the national will. Intelligence anticipates enemy counteractions and looks for strategic and operational situations or conditions that the enemy can exploit that may trigger a mistake or overreaction of the part of U.S. forces. Enemy tactical actions are aimed at friendly operational centers of gravity and Intelligence looks for those rapidly developing situations that may create vulnerabilities or threaten operational centers of gravity. The same applies for enemy operational attacks which are aimed at friendly strategic centers of gravity. Where possible, Intelligence looks beyond the immediate action and assesses what center of gravity or strategic vulnerability the enemy is threatening and the effectiveness of the thrust.

Analytical Considerations for Strategy Development

Strategy development is the essence of collaboration between the Statesman and the General and it is primarily their responsibility. Intelligence assists by asking these questions from the enemy's perspective to clarify issues in the minds of the Statesman and General.

Strategy Selection

Is the strategy designed to have a low profile, be popular with the public and produce quick victory with minimum costs (panacea strategy) or is it based on sound doctrine, focused on the underlying problem aimed at protecting a specific U.S. interest (strategy of doctrine)?

Leverage Selection

Of the levers of national power, which one or combination is most credible in resolving the underlying problem? Is this selection the best one to protect the national interests at issue? What will be the long-term effects on the target and other players? How quickly must the behavior of the target be affected? Can the application of a given lever of power be sustained beyond the will of the target? What mix of leverage should be used? How should U.S. power be phased to best affect the target? Does the strategy attack the enemy's center of gravity and defend our own? Have clear and attainable military objectives been identified? Will the military objectives satisfy the pertinent policy objectives? What are the results of the military capabilities analysis? How does

geography affect the projection of U.S. military power? Do our current military strategic concepts support the current option? Are the military actions suitable, feasible and acceptable? Do they project American values?

IDENTIFICATION AND ELIMINATION OF GAPS

There may be a gap between the chosen policy and the military capability to execute that policy. Barber states that "regardless of the nature of the operation in which they are used, U.S. military forces must be shaped and employed so that they can control the operation in four dimensions:

Time: The ability to act more quickly and endure longer than the adversary.

Reach: The ability to overcome the distance from their bases.

Military capability: The ability to accomplish the mission and neutralize any resistance.¹³⁸

Political agility: The ability to maintain superiority in use of local and international politics for military advantage."¹³⁹

These four dimensions may also be called "strategic reach" and if the military forces cannot operate effectively within these four dimensions, there may exist an exploitable gap between policy and the strategic reach capability. Intelligence anticipates

¹³⁸The military capability issues are addressed in National Power Assessments.

¹³⁹Arthur H. Barber III, "Engagement through Deployment: Shaping America's Military Future," *Parameters* (Winter 1994-95): 19-30.

where, when, how and how effectively an adversary can interfere with U.S. strategic reach.

As an insular nation, the United States must project its forces via air and sea. This is a six phased operation: mobilization, deployment, lodgement, build up, expansion, and exploitation. The mobilization and deployment phase provides the enemy exceptional lead time in preparing for war. Mobilization and deployment telegraphs U.S. intentions giving the enemy time to react. Intelligence should carefully assess how the enemy will use this time to prepare for battle and anticipate his actions for interfering with the lodgment of U.S. forces ashore.

In Vietnam, there was no meaningful capability for the Vietnamese to repulse the lodgment and buildup of U.S. forces, and during the Persian Gulf War, the hesitation of the Iraqi forces to overrun U.S. entry forces was a strategic mistake. Intelligence carefully calculates how the enemy spends his time preparing during the deployment and lodgment phase and, based on his movements and doctrine, extrapolates enemy counter-moves.

Military reach considerations are heavily dependent on U.S. strategic lift as well as favorable receiving areas or ports of entry. Intelligence addresses how the enemy can influence the accessibility of, and activities at, ports of entry. Because of the gradual buildup characterizing Vietnam, security zones were established in sufficient time and to a sufficient degree that ports of entry into South Vietnam were never seriously jeopardized by North Vietnamese forces. During the Persian Gulf War, Iraqi reticence allowed the United States to complete its build up during Desert Shield virtually unchallenged. In Vietnam, sound military practices ensured the security of the ports. In Desert Shield, the

enemy cooperated. In assessing the effectiveness of military reach, Intelligence should carefully consider how the enemy will address ports of entry.

Political agility issues are the domain of the Statesman but Intelligence should have an appreciation for the regional culture and politics to provide insight to the Statesman on how best to advance common interests of potential allies and debilitate the capabilities of the enemy. A carefully crafted National Interests and National Power Assessment provides the basic elements for identifying the political positions, interests and proclivities necessary to provide inducements and reach accommodations in rapidly developing situations. Restated, intelligence can enhance political agility by providing to the Statesman a detailed national interests and national power assessment of the respective belligerents.

Another category of gap is that which is unanticipated in initial planning and evolves during the execution of the basic mission: namely, mission creep. Mission creep creates the gaps between the originally planned mission and the actual mission. If the means necessary to support the original mission cannot accommodate the actual mission, a gap exists.

Siegel identifies nine categories of mission creep Intelligence should anticipate: unplanned-for tasks; unanticipated or unintended tasks; untrained for tasks; nation building tasks; activities due to outside demands; undesired extension of mandate; activities outside political guidance; entangling tasks; or, adding functions without reviewing force

capabilities.¹⁴⁰ Intelligence carefully assesses each of these categories to identify both latent conditions that can impede achievement of U.S. objectives and any active measures that the enemy can bring to bear to further retard U.S. actions.

When confronted with policy-means gaps, the Statesman and the General have five options: increase the military capability, modify the military strategy to accommodate limitations; reduce the demands on the military by redefining vital interests and/or acceptable adversarial conduct; rely on coalition support; or, exercise other forms of leverage to replace or supplement the military alternative with other forms of leverage. Intelligence, speaking from the enemy's perspective, advises the General and Statesman which options are most effective for closing the gaps and how the enemy may counter each option.

Analytical Considerations for the Identification and Elimination of Gaps

The following questions clarify intelligence considerations for identifying and eliminating the gaps between policy and means.

Are the military forces shaped and employed to initially control the four dimensions of the battlefield? How can the enemy most effectively interfere with that control? Is there sufficient military capability to achieve the objective including the desired end state? How can the enemy most effectively interfere with the achievement of that objective? What is the potential for mission creep as the mission develops? If there is

¹⁴⁰Adam B. Siegel, "Mission Creep: An Autopsy of a Hopefully Dying Term," *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement* (Spring 1999): 122.

a gap between the chosen policy and the means to carry it out, what is the best means for closing it?

CHAPTER 4

A PROPOSED STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK

The right questions were not being asked, and a framework for understanding their answers was not being provided.

LTC Jim Major, commenting on the intelligence process during Vietnam

OVERVIEW

The preceding chapters identified problems with the decision making process during the Vietnam War, integrated lessons learned from that war with the observations of Clausewitz and contemporary writers, and distilled a series of questions divided into seven major topics. The premise of this thesis is that the questions derived from the earlier examinations will form an analytical framework useful to intelligence analysts. This chapter extracts the analytical considerations developed in Chapter 3 and presents them as a reference for intelligence analysts supporting strategic policy. The format borrows from Hans Morgenthau's treatment of similar analytical questions in his book, *Politics Among Nations*.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

The first step is to obtain a clear definition of the problem under consideration from the perspective of each interested belligerent and non-belligerent. Knowing how each party sees the underlying problem provides insight to the interests at issue and how each party is likely to proceed. These are the critical questions.

What is the underlying problem as viewed from the perspective of each belligerent and interested non-belligerent? Whose problem is it? Is the American perception of the problem shared by potential allies? Is the problem under consideration a political, economic, military, psychological problem, a problem of national conscience or a combination of problems? How does this problem affect specific belligerent's interests?

INTERESTS ANALYSIS CONSIDERATIONS

Armed with a clear definition of the underlying problem as viewed by each belligerent, Intelligence can better assess the impact of the problem on each belligerent's interests. To do that, Intelligence should be able to answer the following questions.

What are the belligerents' survival, vital, major, peripheral and other diplomatic, economic and military interests in the region? What are their specific interests in this problem? What is the specific U.S. interest involved in this problem? How does this problem affect American survival, vital, major, peripheral and other diplomatic, economic, and military interests? What is the specific threat to U.S. interests? Is this a conflict

between the United States interests and the interests of some other, significant, third party? How will this conflict affect each of the interests of the belligerents? To what extent do the interests of others compliment or conflict with U.S. interests?

The answers to these questions help clarify the nature and intensity of the interest at stake for each belligerent. This information sets the stage for identifying a suitable political and military objective tailored to resolving the underlying problem and accommodating pertinent interests without unduly aggravating other interests.

OBJECTIVE AND END STATE IDENTIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

This step combines two processes: objective identification and end state identification. By incorporating end state considerations into the objective, planners reduce the potential of leaving a war half finished or recognizing up front that war may not be a viable course of action. It forces planners to anticipate the consequences and responsibilities of victory. The following intelligence questions are essential objective and end state identification considerations.

Objective

What is the strategic objective? Does the objective solve the long-term, underlying problem?

Centers of Gravity

What are the centers of gravity that have to be attacked to achieve that objective? What are the operational objectives that best attack specific strategic centers of gravity? What are the discrete steps necessary to achieve the operational objectives? Do the selection and attainment of the operational objectives attack and destabilize the strategic centers of gravity or otherwise achieve the strategic objective? Is the government organized to identify and attack these centers of gravity? How will we know when the strategic center of gravity has been successfully destroyed?

End State

What is the desired end state? What are the incongruencies between the objectives and the end states and how are they resolved? Can the end state be achieved by the military? What are the cultural and political barriers and facilitators for the creation of viable internal mechanisms for sustaining the basic necessities for life? What are the cultural and political internal distractors that impede the re-establishment of internal stability, domestic structures, and government authority by fledgling governments? What interests of the coalition members can be used as a basis for inducing coalition assistance for long-term maintenance and support programs? What cultural, economic and political inhibitors prevent commodity control from being vested in legitimate government authority? Is the economic culture and infrastructure conducive to the privatization (local contracting) of residual logistical requirements and emerging commodities trading necessary for local commerce and economic recovery? Can the objective and end state be

met with current doctrine and force structure? Are military resources sufficient in quality and quantity to achieve the objective and end state? What is the scale of the means necessary to achieve the objective including the end state?

Success Criteria

What is the definition of success? Is there a positive correlation between operational objectives, enemy strategic centers of gravity and the strategic objective? Do the selection and attainment of the operational objectives attack and destabilize the strategic centers of gravity or otherwise achieve the strategic objective?

Actions Necessary to Achieve the Objective

What are the actions necessary to achieve the objective? Is the government organized to fight the war for the duration and throughout the spectrum necessary to achieve the objective? Has the government identified the political objective and prescribed actions necessary to achieve the objective?

Exit Strategy

What is the exit strategy? What are the recognizable conditions for knowing when to exit? Is there a transition process identified? What are the military and political conditions for withdrawal and disengagement and are they congruent?

These questions help Intelligence identify the issues that invariably surface during the course of conflict and reduces uncertainty and surprise for the Statesman and the General.

STRATEGIC APPRAISAL CONSIDERATIONS

The strategic appraisal is an internal evaluation, a base line, for assessing how well prepared the U.S. is for a conflict. Its focus is on the internal processes and strengths needed for successfully prosecuting a war. The danger lies in the uncritical manner in which favorable answers may be assumed, as we did in Vietnam. While in all likelihood the answers to these questions will be favorable, a critical review of each one may reveal a seam or vulnerability that an adversary may also identify and exploit.

Demands on the National Will

What are the demands on the national will? Is there clarity of communication between the government and the people? Has the government clearly linked the underlying problems, affected interests and strategic objective in such a manner that it enjoys public support? Is there a strategy for adequately gaining and maintaining public support?

Demands on the National Capacity

What are the demands on the national capacity? Does the U.S. have the political leverage to obtain coalition support or is the U.S. confronted with a go-it-alone option? Is the political object worth going it alone? Are there sufficient resources for a go it alone option? Can the U.S. diplomatically afford to go-it-alone? Is the U.S. economic engine large enough to fight the war, underwrite allied support and sustain the public will?

Demands on the Military

What are the demands on the military? Is the military doctrine, funding, resources and discipline sufficient to achieve the military objective? Is there sufficient political guidance and resourcing to develop and pursue a meaningful military objective? Can the objective be met with current doctrine and force structure? Are military resources sufficient in quality and quantity to achieve the objective?

These questions help Intelligence identify where the nation is strong, where it is vulnerable and what strengths may be available to compensate for identified weaknesses.

NATIONAL POWER ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The national power assessment compares the relative power of each of the belligerents and interested non-belligerents. In this assessment the relative political, geographical, economic, sociological/cultural, technological, informational, and military

strengths are compared to see if there are any critical vulnerabilities, exploitable seams or any unanticipated sources of strength that might influence the course of the conflict.

National Power

Conduct a National Power assessment comparing the relative natural and social determinants of power of interested belligerents and non-belligerents. Regionally, what political alignments exist and how does the political environment affect United States options? What influence can the United States bring to bear in the area? What are the dominant powers in the region and how are they likely to respond? How does the geography of the area affect United States interests and the application of United States power?

Political Leadership

Assess each belligerents' political trinity and the respective national will of each element within the trinity. What are the comparative strengths and weaknesses of each belligerents political trinity? Who are the key decision makers in each country and what has shaped their thinking? What is their likely perspective on this issue? How will this perspective be influenced by the role this individual plays in his government? How will the decision maker's perspective influence subsequent government actions? How does the governmental structure affect policy making and the decision makers and how can that structure be influenced? What societal influences exist and how will they affect the decision maker? What relationships exist between the decision makers' nation-state and

the other international actors? How stable are the governments? Do relevant actors/belligerents have the power to influence the outcome and will they use that power to influence the outcome?

Centers of Gravity

Assess the players' center of gravity. What moral, historical, cultural, psychological, religious, and ideological forces are in play and to what extent do they influence other aspects of the problem? Is it within the power of the U.S. to substantially modify these forces to accommodate U.S. aims? How are they modified? State what the center of gravity is for each player. How will you attack your opponent's center of gravity? How will you defend your own?

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Strategy development is the essence of collaboration between the Statesman and the General and it is primarily their responsibility. Intelligence assists by asking these questions from the enemy's perspective to clarify issues in the minds of the Statesman and General. It addresses strategy and leverage selection.

Strategy Selection

Is the strategy designed to have a low profile, be popular with the public and produce quick victory with minimum costs (panacea strategy) or is it based on sound

doctrine, focused on the underlying problem aimed at protecting a specific U.S. interest (strategy of doctrine)?

Leverage Selection

Of the levers of national power, which one or combination is most credible in resolving the underlying problem? Is this selection the best one to protect the national interests at issue? What will be the long-term effects on the target and other players? How quickly must the behavior of the target be affected? Can the application of a given lever of power be sustained beyond the will of the target? What mix of leverage should be used? How should U.S. power be phased to best affect the target? Does the strategy attack the enemy's center of gravity and defend our own? Have clear and attainable military objectives been identified? Will the military objectives satisfy the pertinent policy objectives? What are the results of the military capabilities analysis? How does geography affect the projection of U.S. military power? Do our current military strategic concepts support the current option? Are the military actions suitable, feasible and acceptable? Do they project American values?

IDENTIFICATION AND ELIMINATION OF GAPS CONSIDERATIONS

Identification and elimination of gaps is also the primary responsibility of the Statesman and the General. Intelligence, viewing the conflict from the enemy's perspective considers the following questions and advises the Statesman and the General of the sufficiency of their planning in light of the enemy's capabilities.

Are the military forces shaped and employed to initially control the four dimensions of the battlefield? How can the enemy most effectively interfere with that control? Is there sufficient military capability to achieve the objective including the desired end state? How can the enemy most effectively interfere with the achievement of that objective? What is the potential for mission creep as the mission develops? If there is a gap between the chosen policy and the means to carry it out, what is the best means for closing it?

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The way I'm telling you is as good as any and better than most.

The character Shane, explaining how to conduct a gunfight in *Shane*

In Vietnam, there was a disconnect between policy and strategy that resulted in strategic policy failure. Kissinger observes that a major problem confronting Vietnam Era warplanners was the lack of a "criteria to assess a challenge so at variance with the American experience and American ideology." Continuing, he says, "(t)here was also a nearly incomprehensible misconception about the nature of the military problem. Lacking criteria for judgment, officials often misunderstood, and therefore often misstated, the issues."¹⁴¹

This thesis provides such a criteria.

¹⁴¹Kissinger, 658, 699.

HYPOTHESIS REVIEW AND KEY FINDINGS

The research question posed at the beginning of this thesis is “What strategic policy assessments should be made by intelligence prior to committing U.S. military forces to war?” The supporting hypothesis is that the strategic policy lessons learned from Vietnam, when combined with the teaching of Clausewitz, provide a framework for strategic policy intelligence that will reduce the gaps between wartime policy and strategy.

To substantiate that hypothesis four questions were addressed. What teachings from Clausewitz provide the basis for strategic intelligence? What are the American strategic policy lessons learned in Vietnam? How do the teachings of Clausewitz and the lessons learned combine into a framework for strategic policy intelligence? What sequence of assessments and considerations best facilitates strategic policy and strategy planning?

The methodology used was to provide a strategic overview of the American experience in Vietnam, identify the strategic lessons learned, extract from Clausewitz a methodology for policy intelligence, integrate the lessons learned from Vietnam into Clausewitz’s methodology, and propose an analytical framework for providing strategic policy intelligence.

To do this, this thesis reviewed Clausewitz for the express purpose of bringing forth a rarely recognized and seldom appreciated insight he possessed concerning strategic policy intelligence. This provided the answer to question 1, “What teachings from Clausewitz provide the basis for strategic intelligence?” The answer was that, from

Clausewitz's distant perspective, there are five basic strategic intelligence considerations when preparing for war. They are interests analysis, objective formation, a strategic self examination, a comparison of the relative national power with other belligerents, a well thought out strategy derived from joint deliberations between the Statesman and the General, and the identification and elimination of gaps between strategy and policy.

Then, this thesis summarized the strategic considerations characterizing the American military participation in Vietnam and listed the strategic policy lessons learned identified by Secretaries of Defense Robert S. McNamara, Clark Clifford, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, and President Nixon. Those answers, contained in Appendix A, Summary of American Strategic Policy Lessons Learned, answer the question, "What are the American strategic policy lessons learned in Vietnam?"

Next, this thesis integrated the observations of Clausewitz and the lessons learned from McNamara, Clifford, Kissinger and Nixon into a broad analytical framework for strategic policy intelligence to answer the third question, "How do the teachings of Clausewitz and the lessons learned combine into a framework for strategic policy intelligence?" As a result of this integration the frame work became: problem identification, interests analysis, objective and end state identification, strategic appraisal, national power assessment, strategy development, and the identification and closure of gaps.

Once these broad analytical areas were identified, supporting details were culled from military and political writers addressing strategic policy issues and distilled into a frame work that takes the following form.

a. **Problem Identification.** This analytical step involves the identification of the underlying problem and determining who really has responsibility for resolving the problem. A determination must be made as to whether the problem is a political, economic, military, psychological problem, a problem of national conscience or a combination of problems and how the problem affects U.S. interests.

b. **Interests Analysis.** Interests analysis consists of identifying the true interest affected by the underlying problem and making a honest appraisal of how the problem jeopardizes the interest.

c. **Objective and End State Identification.** Objective identification seeks to identify a balanced objective that both protects the affected U.S. interest and solves the underlying problem. This step incorporates a definition of the preferred end state into the definition of "the objective" to ensure that a long term solution to the initial problem is incorporated into early objective planning to preclude the U.S. from having to recommit U.S. forces at some future time to re-address the original problem.

d. **Strategic Appraisal.** This step is an introspective examination of how prepared the U.S. is to pursue its military course of action. The national will, the national capacity and the demands upon the military are closely examined to capitalize on our strengths, offset our weaknesses, and identify where the U.S. might be vulnerable to hostile exploitation.

e. **National Power Assessment.** The national power assessment is similar to the strategic appraisal in that other belligerents' elements and levers of national power, including their leadership and centers of gravity, are evaluated and compared to the

current U.S. power and internal condition. Both the strategic appraisal and the national power assessment may be combined into one step. However, they were presented separately to ensure that the internal condition of the U.S. is specifically subjected to a thorough critical review.

f. **Strategy Development.** Strategy development seeks to distinguish between panacea strategies, which do not serve the national interest, and strategies of doctrine which do serve the national interest. In either case, the strategy must be supported by an intelligent selection of a lever, or combination of levers, of national power that credibly project U.S. national power and are of sufficient strength to subdue the opponent's will and ability to resist.

g. **Identification and Closure of Gaps.** This final assessment examines the U.S. capability to project the national will through military means and identify where there may exist a short fall in capability. Five options are proposed for resolving the shortfalls: increase the military capability, modify the military strategy to accommodate limitations; reduce the demands on the military by redefining vital interests and/or acceptable adversarial conduct; rely on coalition support; or, exercise other forms of leverage to replace or supplement the military alternative with other forms of leverage.

These seven basic considerations form the general outline for assessing the efficacy of committing U.S. forces to war. They offer a tentative solution for the framework missing for the Vietnam era planners as lamented by Kissinger.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Casualty producing gaps between policy and strategy adversely reflect on the General and the Statesman ultimately eroding their credibility and public trust. Intelligence bears the responsibility of informing policy. Mis-steps in the past demonstrated the absence of a readily available analytical framework for conducting a pre-deployment analysis of a target region. This thesis is a tentative step toward the development of such a framework.

As such, this framework may prove useful for the intelligence community in three ways. First, for the strategic intelligence officer supporting policy, it serves as an analytical compass in the fog of war. Second, it serves as a baseline for intelligence agency team or branch chiefs responsible for regional target development. Third, it offers a training vehicle for walking new intelligence analysts through the analytical issues confronting political and military strategists contemplating war.

In a larger sense, the more significant recommendation, perhaps, is to test this thesis's validity and reliability in the crucible of war. The record of human history demonstrates that war constantly looms just beyond the horizon. It is simply a matter of time before a new conflict erupts and that event will provide a laboratory for testing the premises of this thesis.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The early 1960s now seem like a long time ago and the Americans who died faithful to the defense of South Vietnam and in the service of their country now belong to the ages. Inevitably, there will be another war, and invariably, the Statesman and the General will be poised to repeat the mistakes of the past. Hopefully, Intelligence will be able to say, "There is a better way."

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF AMERICAN STRATEGIC POLICY LESSONS LEARNED

SECRETARY MCNAMARA'S OBSERVATIONS

Thirty years after serving as Secretary of Defense under Kennedy and Johnson, Robert S. McNamara reassessed the decision making of those leaders and identifies eleven causes of failure in Vietnam and six lessons learned.

Causes of Failure

The causes of failure were: misjudgment of the geopolitical intentions of North Vietnam and the Viet Cong, and an exaggeration of the threat to the United States; viewing the South Vietnamese people and leadership as having an intense desire for freedom and democracy as Americans but seriously misjudging the political forces within South Vietnam; underestimation of nationalism as a motivating factor for the enemy; ignorance of regional history, culture, politics and leadership since no Southeast Asian experts existed for the National Command Authority to consult with when making policy decisions; misjudgment on the capabilities of modern equipment and doctrine when arrayed against an unconventional and highly mobilized citizenry; failure to incorporate the government and the people into a public discussion and commitment before deploying

initiating hostilities; failure to maintain public support; failure to engage the international forums before taking unilateral action to pursue courses of actions of what we think is the another country's best interest; lack of true coalition support at the policy level; failure to appreciate that some problems do not have an immediate solution, and finally; a failure to organize the top echelons of the executive department to deal effectively with the extraordinarily complex range of political and military issues associated with the application of military force under substantial constraints over long period of time.¹⁴²

Strategic Policy Lessons Learned

From the failures, McNamara offers the following six strategic policy lessons learned. They are: understand the mindset of your adversary; communicate with your adversary at a high level; in foreign policy, practice the democratic principles we preach; apply U.S. power - economic, political, or military - only in a context of multinational decision making; acknowledge that some problems in international affairs have no solution, particularly no military solution; organize to apply and administer military power with intensity and thoroughness.¹⁴³

¹⁴²McNamara, *In Retrospect*, 321-323.

¹⁴³McNamara, *Argument Without End*, 392-396.

SECRETARY CLIFFORD'S OBSERVATIONS

Clark Clifford served as a White House advisor to the President before succeeding Robert McNamara as Secretary of Defense under the Johnson Administration. He served from January 1968 until the departure of the Johnson Administration in January, 1969, and has identified ten strategic policy lessons learned.¹⁴⁴

- a. America should not commit her forces to war unless "our national security is threatened."
- b. Once the decision has been made to commit to war, "use greater military force immediately."
- c. National prestige should not be risked where our control of the situation is weak.
- d. The corrupt incompetence of the Vietnamese government contributed to failure. American objectives in Vietnam were dependent on the capabilities of the South Vietnamese government.
- e. America overestimated her allies. They did not want to send troops to Vietnam. They did not perceive the regional threat the same way as the United States.
- f. America underestimated her adversary. This underestimating included North Vietnam's political will and its objectives.
- g. The U.S. military never adequately laid out the expected demands of the war on the military.

¹⁴⁴Clifford, 404-614, Passim.

h. The civilian leadership should have been more insistent that the military clarify its concerns and strategies.

i. The basic questions, "Can the war be won?," "What do we have to do to win?," "What is our purpose? What is achievable" were never specifically answered.

j. The greatest decision making failure was that "no connection between bombing the North and sending American Ground troops was recognized and discussed before the bombing began."

PRESIDENT NIXON'S OBSERVATIONS

In President Nixon's view, the primary American interest lay in preserving Vietnam from communist domination and that in the pursuit of that interest American applied policies characterized by six failures to: understand that the war was an invasion from North Vietnam, not an insurgency in South Vietnam; mobilize the American people; understand the enemy determination and adopt an effective counter strategy; adapt military strategy to "the political circumstances of the war;" counter North Vietnam's military strategy of exploiting Laos and Cambodia; and, anticipate the consequences to the South Vietnamese government and society with the assassination of President Diem.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵Nixon, 47.

SECRETARY KISSINGER'S OBSERVATIONS

Kissinger, who served as President Nixon's National Security Advisor, observes that a major problem confronting the Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon administrations was that American policy and strategy planners "lacked (a) criteria to assess a challenge so at variance with the American experience and American ideology." Elaborating further, Kissinger adds, "There was also a nearly incomprehensible misconception about the nature of the military problem. Lacking criteria for judgment, officials often misunderstood, and therefore often misstated, the issues."

Policy Failures

Kissinger identified the following strategic policy failures.¹⁴⁶

- a. There was a failure to conduct a policy review to determine if "the military and political objectives on behalf of which America had already invested so much were attainable, by what means and over what period of time, indeed, of whether the premises which had generated these commitments were even correct."
- b. There was a failure of American policy planners to carefully assess the costs and potential outcomes of the war.
- c. There was a failure to properly identify the nature of the military problem.
- d. There was a failure to intelligently choose between a gun or butter policy in the face of insufficient resources.

¹⁴⁶Kissinger, 657-700, passim.

e. There was a failure to “carefully identify the political goals and the necessary military strategy prior to going to war.”

Strategic Policy Lessons Learned

a. Understand the nature of the threat and the objectives that can be met followed by a clear military strategy with a clear definition of success.

b. Carefully identify the political goals and the necessary military strategy prior to going to war.

c. Provide for internal domestic cohesion.

APPENDIX B

MILITARY CAPABILITIES ANALYSIS JORDAN, TAYLOR and MODEL

MILITARY CAPABILITY ANALYSIS is complex, requiring multivariate analysis. However, the following factors, illustrated at a high level of generalization, must normally be considered.

- a. Force size/structure--How large are the relevant military establishments in terms of forces-in-being and trained reserves? How many people under arms are at the disposal of the various services (e.g., army, navy, air force, marines), in how many active and reserve units are they deployed, and how are the units structured and equipped?
- b. Weapons systems--How many weapons systems of what types are at the disposal of the opposing forces? What is the potential of these weapons in terms of range, accuracy, lethality, survivability, and reliability?
- c. Mobility--What are the locations of units and weapons systems? How quickly and by what means could they be moved to strategically and tactically important locations? How much airlift and sealift are available for overseas operations?
- d. Logistics (supply)--Given the fact that military units can carry only so much equipment with them and must be resupplied if they are to remain in action for more than a few days, how efficient are systems of resupply?
- e. Strategic and tactical doctrines--What are the nature and the quality of the doctrines of force deployment and military engagement that fundamentally control the employment of military units?
- f. Training--What is the level of training of both forces-in-being and reserve units? How proficient are soldiers in employing their weapons under varying conditions? How skilled are forces in combined operations?
- g. Military leadership--How effective are the officers and noncommissioned officers in the chain of command through which orders are issued and carried out?
- h. Morale--A function of many variables and absolutely vital to success in combat what are the levels of unit morale? Of fighting spirit?

i. Industry--What is the industrial capacity of a given nation to produce military equipment of the types and in the amounts likely to be required for sustained, long-term combat? How quickly can the nation switch from production of civilian goods to war material?

j. Technology--What is the level of technological capability of existing weapons systems and command, control, and communications (C3) systems? What is the status of technology of weapons and C3 systems at various stages of progress in a nation's military research, development, test, and evaluation processes?

k. Intelligence--How effective are technical and human intelligence-gathering means? What is the level of competence in analyzing raw intelligence data and producing estimates useful to decision-makers?

l. Popular will--How prepared would the population be to sustain the domestic deprivations (conscription, rationing of various types, etc.) that would result from sustained, large-scale wartime activities?

m. National leadership--What are the levels of resolve and skill of a nation's leaders in managing a conventional war effort against the backdrop of nuclear deterrence?

n. Alliance--What is the status of alliances that can change opposing force ratios significantly? What is the quality of alliance commitments under various conditions, in terms of military units, weapons systems, bases, and supplies likely to be made available?

"Answers to such questions establish the factors to be weighed and blended to produce a judgment of military capability. The analysis process is and must be continuous, for there is insufficient time available in crisis situations to gather anew all the data required for analysis."¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷Jordan, 27-28.

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